

ДУЭЛЬ ИСТОРИКОВ

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ПРУДНИКОВА

**ВЕЛИКАЯ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ:
БЫЛ ЛИ РАЗГРОМ?**

Марк

СОЛОНИН

Abstract

The Red Army was not ready for war. An indicator of this was the monstrous defeat of the summer of 1941. It was only by a miracle that this development of events did not turn into the final defeat of the Soviet Union, in order to recover from the defeat of the Red Army, it took many months. This is the version of the famous historian and publicist Mark Solonin. But was there really a rout? Or is it just a

propaganda cliché? Elena Prudnikova believes that our country was ready for war and the events in it developed according to the most optimal scenario of all possible.

Who is right in this dispute is up to the reader!

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Mar Solonin, Elena Prudnikova
The Great Patriotic War: was
there a rout?

Elena Prudnikova

Forgotten Victories of 1941

There are, however, cases that are even more interesting: when the connection between the mythologeme and reality is not "seven percent", and not even zero, but negative...

Kirill Eskov

The "catastrophe of June 1941" is an event that has been wrapped up in a record number of historical myths. soviet propaganda, anti-Soviet, post-Soviet, anti-post-Soviet, Goebbels's, which has come down to us half a century later, and the Western one, known in echoes, generate such interference that sometimes they completely hide the subject of the dispute. Moreover, historians (and military historians are almost exclusively men) are wedged in a purely masculine way: having reached the opportunity to move tanks around the map, they lose interest in everything else.

One thing is invariable: the summer of 1941 is considered by everyone as something wrong - it should

not have been so. No, if you take the position of the Germans, then everything is clear. According to the logic of things, an army suffering such defeats as the Red Army should have realized the futility of resistance, fall apart and raise their hands in unison. And everything turned out the other way around: at first they fell apart and raised their hands, and then they began to resist, and the further, the more fierce. It is as if a pack of wolves, rushing to herd a herd of rams, suddenly discovered in those first fangs, then claws, then steel spikes under the wool, and for a snack also the ability to spit fire. The question is, why then did they ru

For the Germans, this was clearly the wrong campaign opening. But why is it considered wrong by our historians? In almost all works, it slips: it turned out wrong, it should have been somehow different. How it should have been, no one says, but

turned out clearly wrong. And how is it right? Well... everyone is different here.

What was the Soviet myth? The army was ready to throw the enemy back from the border like a tennis ball and end the war with little bloodshed on foreign territory, but it was prevented. (Given that after the Victory, military history was supervised by pre-war generals, what else to expect?). Who interfered? But who else, if not these civilians. The choice of "civilians" was impressive: from Stalin and Voroshilov (who was still not recognized as a military figure even after fifteen years as People's Commissar) to malicious security officers and stubborn party secretaries. Oh, by the way: the Germans had a lot more tanks and planes. In general, everyone is to blame, except for Comrade General.

The anti-Soviet myth - "the catastrophe of 1941" occurred because the people did not want to defend the Bolshevik government. True, then for some reason he wanted to, and so actively - some partisans are worth something! Probably, the Soviet people despaired of waiting for the fall of the mustachioed tyrant, who promised to send the families of all prisoners to Siberia (and Marshal Zhukov even to the wall). Yes, they put Chekists with machine guns in the back. And why else would they suddenly fight? Not just like that, from Soviet patriotism! What can be Soviet patriotism? Who saw him in Paris? There, after all, it is absolutely known that the entire Russian people fights exclusively for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland.

There is another version of Dr. Goebbels. In the USSR, it was not in use, and only in the 90s, when the war had already been pretty much forgotten, and the veterans had become just ridiculous expansive old men, Mr. Suvorov revived it (by the way, he relied on the Soviet myth of "invincible and legendary"). Stalin, it turns out, wanted to attack Germany himself, and the German Fuhrer only delivered a preemptive strike. He defended himself so desperately that, in order to protect himself, he reached Moscow itself and installed the German administration in all the occupied regions. True, it is not entirely clear what kind of devil Europe is for Stalin - well, after all, everyone knows that these Russians, all sorts of tsars of Peter, Stalin, Putin, only dream of power over the world. In general, whoever has something itching, he talks about it (I'm talking about power and the Western mentality, if someone didn't understand) ...

Yes, there is also the American version of events (known mainly from echoes and films). The war happened because

Hitler decided to exterminate the Jews. To the east of Poland there was, however, some kind of scuffle, but this is not interesting - anyway, the United States won the war, along the way, threatening a bunch of forces and human lives to save Private Ryan. Why, at the same time, a third of Germany, headed by Berlin, ended up in the hands of the Russians, is completely incomprehensible. Probably, this is a born Russian cunning.

Other myths are a bizarre combination of four basic options, and their own, taken with a minus sign. Plus, on top of all this, a huge number of healthy men enthusiastically drive tanks around the map. And gasoline for tanks, probably, by itself falls from the sky into puddles and accumulates in swamps. In general, a lot of blah blah

blah and surprisingly little concrete data. It was only in the 1990s that the regime of silence

was ripped open, and a lot of facts and documents came out. And it immediately turned out that "in reality, everything was completely different from what it really was." Thanks to Viktor Suvorov, who aroused the people's interest in the war, otherwise priceless evidence would have gathered dust, at best in monographs with a circulation of three hundred copies. No, really - thanks to him and the

British propaganda department, or whatever it's called...

Chapter

1 Was the attack unexpected?

What do you think? In

1925, the widely known later book "Mein Kampf" was published. Perhaps then the Kremlin did not begin to read the program of some petty German political gopnik. But when in the early 30s this gopnik began to rapidly gain influence - be sure, read and worked through. And there, by the way, the most interesting things are written in black and white: ***We National Socialists must point out that the foreign policy of our populist state will primarily proceed from the following. Our state will first of all strive to establish a healthy, natural, vital proportion between the size of our population and the rate of its growth, on the one hand, and the quantity and quality of our territories, on the other. Only in this way can our foreign policy properly secure the fate of our race, united in our state.***

We can consider as a healthy proportion only such a ratio between these two quantities, which completely and completely ensures the subsistence of the people with the products of our own land. Any other state of affairs, even if it lasts for centuries or millennia, is abnormal and unhealthy. Sooner or later, such a situation will bring the greatest harm to the people and may even lead to its complete

destruction.

So that the people can secure true freedom for themselves existence, he needs a fairly large territory.

...

Having decided to get new lands in Europe, we could get them, by and large, only at the expense of Russia. In this case, we had to gird our loins and move along the same road that the knights of our orders once walked. The German sword must

would be to conquer the land to the German plow and thereby provide the daily bread of the German nation ...

...

When we talk about the conquest of new lands in Europe, we can, of course, have in mind primarily only Russia and those border states that are subordinate to it.

Fate itself points to us with a finger. By delivering Russia into the hands of Bolshevism, fate has deprived the Russian people of that intelligentsia on which its state existence has up to now rested and which alone served as a guarantee of a certain stability of the state. It was not the state gifts of the Slavs that gave strength and strength to the Russian state. Russia owed all this to the German elements—a most excellent example of the enormous state role that the German elements are capable of playing, acting within a lower race... For centuries, Russia lived off the German core in its upper strata of the population. Now this nucleus has been completely and completely exterminated. The place of the Germans was taken by the Jews. But just as the Russians cannot throw off the yoke of the Jews on their own, so the Jews alone are not able to keep this vast state in their subordination for a long time. The Jews themselves are by no means an element of organization, but rather an enzyme of disorganization. This gigantic eastern state is inevitably doomed to destruction. All the prerequisites for this have already matured. The end of Jewish domination in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state. Fate destined us to witness such a catastrophe, which, better than anything else, will definitely confirm the correctness of our racial theory. Do you think that Hitler did not like only the Bolsheviks, but treated old Russia differently? Don't be fooled! **“Let us imagine, for just one moment, that our German**

foreign policy were so clever as to assume the role of Japan in 1904. Imagine this for a moment, and you will

understand what beneficial consequences this could have for Germany. Then it would not have come to a "world" war. The blood that would have been shed in 1904 would have saved us a hundredfold

blood shed in 1914-1918. And what a powerful position Germany would now occupy in this case!

...

...An unchanging political testament in the field of foreign policy can be formulated for the German nation in the following words:

“Never put up with the existence of two continental powers in Europe! In any attempt on the frontiers of Germany to create a second military power, or even only a state capable of later becoming a major military power, you must see a direct attack on Germany. Once such a situation is created, you not only have the right, but you are obliged to fight against it by all means, even to the use of weapons. And you have no right to rest until you succeed in preventing the emergence of such a state, or until you succeed in destroying it, if it has already arisen. See to it that our people conquer new lands for themselves here in Europe, and not see the foundations of their existence in the colonies. Until our state has managed to provide each of its sons with a sufficient amount of land for centuries to come, you should not consider that our position is solid. Never forget that the most sacred right is the right to own enough land that we ourselves will cultivate. Never forget that the most sacred is the blood that we shed in the struggle for the land.

We do not need a Western orientation and not an Eastern orientation, we need an oriental policy aimed at conquering new land for the German people. The

appearance of such a leader at the head of Germany required reconsider Soviet military plans. And they have been revised.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, one or another number of limitrophe (small border) states, headed by Poland and Finland, and England and France behind them, were considered as the most likely enemy of the USSR. (They also helped Hitler in every possible way on his state path, but we are not talking about that.) No need to laugh: given the general weakness of the USSR and

the weakness of the army in particular, the enemy could be quite formidable. Perhaps even capable of

recapturing Ukraine. After 1933, a new enemy appeared - Germany, presumably in alliance with Poland. Under the fight with this "sweet couple" we made operational plans.

By the way, those who like to shed tears about the "poor victims of Stalin" Poland and Finland would do well to be reminded that both of these states were sharply aggressive towards the USSR. The Finns tried to capture Karelia twice during the Civil War, they took Pechenga, and if it worked out, they would not have abandoned both the Kola Peninsula and the Leningrad Region - in general, as much as they could swallow. The Poles repeatedly tried to occupy Ukraine and Belarus. After the unsuccessful Polish-Soviet war of 1920 for us (which was initiated exclusively by Warsaw), they received the western territories of these republics, but claimed both Kyiv and Smolensk. We were just lucky that in 1935 Piłsudski, the only sane Polish leader, died - in the beginning European turmoil, he implicitly, but very effectively helped Hitler and, nine out of ten, would have joined Germany in the "campaign to the east."

Once again we were lucky that Hitler failed to reach an agreement with the new Polish government. After all, he tried to do this, and very actively - and, in principle, he could, despite the frank insanity of the new Polish government. At that time Marshal Rydz-Smigły ruled the politics of Warsaw. It was a figure! A professional soldier, 25 years in the ranks, a nationalist, a conservative, a cleric - all at once. Army straightforwardness, multiplied by nationalism and professional ambition - it is hard to imagine the worst candidate for a national leader in such a difficult time. It seems that he really felt like the leader of the empire ... When the European powers divided Czechoslovakia in September 1938, the

Poles also grabbed their piece - on the sly, they acquired the industrialized Teszyn region. After that, Hitler made them an even more promising proposal: to join the Anti-Comintern Pact, that is, to become an ally of Germany in the coming war. In the future, after the victory

Germany over the USSR, this promised huge benefits: Lithuania, Belarus, perhaps Smolensk, perhaps part of Ukraine. Hitler did not offend the allies - but, by the way, he already shared Czechoslovakia! True, you had

to pay to enter the pact. Hitler set the entrance fee to a minimum: he only wanted to get Danzig, which was under Polish control and inhabited by Germans, and build an extraterritorial highway and railway to East Prussia. Requirements - more moderate nowhere. What do you think the Poles did? Refused. No, they never objected to a campaign against the USSR - but they did not want to give up anything.

Why, by the way, did they refuse? The question is interesting. Of course, the Polish arrogance entered into all the jokes, but one reference to the Polish show-off is not enough here. After all, membership in the Anti-Comintern Pact promised the Poles huge benefits, plus victory over the main enemy - Russia. Did the famous Polish arrogance not allow for the sake of this to give up such a minuscule as Danzig and a strip of land several tens of meters wide?

And let's see - maybe the refusal and the war that followed it were beneficial to someone? Well, first of

all, of course, it was beneficial to the Soviet Union - however, we did not have any levers of influence on the Polish government. However, the Poles had an ally, relations with which resembled the relations of the Russian Empire with the Entente before the First World War. An old ally - the Poles went to Moscow in 1812 as part of the Napoleonic army. And now, as soon as the Polish state was born in 1918, it immediately found a friend in the person of France. At least, the French supplied the Poles with military equipment and military advisers.

So: the union of Warsaw and Berlin was not beneficial for Paris on either side. France and Germany were old, centuries-old enemies. Having entered Hitler's military-political bloc, Poland automatically subscribed to all his adventures. Even if she does not participate in the Franco-German war, which will certainly happen (the cat and the dog will grapple anyway), then after all, she will not hit the Germans in the back. On the other hand, if the German Fuhrer starts a war with Poland, he will at least slightly weaken his army, and if

you'll be very lucky, and the USSR will get into this mess ... Do you feel the prospects? Yes, and the British, with their system of "checks and balances" on the European continent, was also unprofitable for such a weakening of France.

You ask: what about Poland? The fate of the allies of the crafty Europeans never worried. In 1914, the British and French, having accumulated good groups of influence in the Russian Empire, dragged our country into an absolutely unnecessary war. Anyone, do you think, worried about the fate of Russia? So the fate of Poland in 1939 worried the French exactly to the extent that it could be used to their own benefit. And what do you think?

Nothing

personal, only politics.

Therefore, as soon as there was a crack in Polish-German relations, both the French and the British promised to support the Poles in the event of an attack by Hitler. So it's easy to understand Rydz-Smigly's calculations: Poland does not accept the Fuhrer's conditions, and he has nowhere to go, he needs a border with the USSR. Agree without any conditions - excellent! So, the Polish marshal managed to put the impudent Teutons in their place. If he does not agree, if Germany starts a war with Poland, then France and England, fulfilling their obligations, will get involved in a conflict, pull the main forces of the German army over and win (the French army was considered the strongest in Europe). Germany will be put in its place and once again robbed throughout the 20th century, the Poles will also get something - a common victory. In general, the calculation is correct, with one exception: when concluding such alliances, one should stipulate the specific amounts of assistance and the timing of its provision.

So, the German Fuhrer was faced with a choice. Negotiate with the Poles on their terms? In this case, he will no longer see Danzig or the road - if they didn't give it up before the war, then they won't give it up after it. The combat effectiveness of the Polish army was close to zero, but the ambitions of the Polish government were striving for infinity. The only strategic meaning of this treaty was access to the Soviet border. But there was another way to get there...

Meanwhile, the conflict developed. In March 1939, the Germans were still thinking about what to do next, and the Polish press had already launched an anti-German campaign, the government decided on partial mobilization. On March 26, Poland responded with a final refusal to the German proposals, and on the 28th declared that any change in the position of Danzig would be considered an attack.

In an effort to prevent Poland, which ensured the security of the Western European countries, from becoming a German satellite, England made a fatal mistake for itself. She decided to unilaterally guarantee her independence, which further strengthened her intentions to demonstrate this independence. Literally just now, in mid-March, Hitler seized the rest of the Czech Republic, spitting on all the guarantees of the European powers. England and France... yes, they protested. True, their protests did not make the slightest impression on the Fuhrer - but they did protest! But even the example of the Czech Republic did not bring Rydz Smigly to reason - he believed the British guarantees. April 13 and France confirmed the Franco-Polish treaty of 1921. It was already a completely suicidal step - why?

In general, Poland ran up, ran into - and ran into. The war began on September 1, 1939. And it turned out that not all calculations are brought to life.

No, on September 3, France and England declared war on Germany - but it looked extremely strange (however, only France could fully participate in the big continental war). The French began to mobilize

already on August 23, by the end of September they had concentrated 70 infantry, 7 motorized infantry, 2 mechanized and 3 mechanized cavalry divisions against Germany, reinforced by 50 tank and 20 reconnaissance battalions. What's the point? On the line of the Franco-German border, the French troops were forbidden to load weapons with live shells and cartridges - where is Stalin with his "do not succumb to provocations"! There were posters at Saarbrücken[1] : "We will not fire the first shot in — this war." Well, why did the Germans need to fire the first shot? Absolutely no reason!

So the troops of the "belligerent" parties successfully visited each other, drank, exchanged cigarettes. Polish diplomats persuaded, insisted, got rid of them with promises that

the fighting was about to begin, but in reality the French did nothing at all and the British almost nothing. The Poles learned how

real the promises were after the start of the war. It turned out that France could provide assistance to Poland in 1940, and start hostilities no earlier than 1941. The French commander-in-chief, General Gamelin, simply did not want to receive the Polish military attache. In Britain it was even more entertaining. On September 9, the Polish military mission met with the Chief of the British General Staff, General W. Ironside, and was surprised to learn that England did not have any specific plans to help Poland, since France was supposed to deal with this[2]. The legendary phrase, which belonged to the British Minister of Aviation Wood, belongs to the same time. In response to a proposal to strike at the Black Forest in order to create difficulties for the Germans with the forest, he heard: "What are you talking about, this is impossible. This is private property. You still ask me to bomb the Ruhr!

True, Europeans can be understood. Despite all the patriotic phrases of Rydz-Smigly, the Polish army held out for ... a week. On September 5, German troops broke through the front, on the 7th Rydz Smigly left Warsaw, and since communication failed almost immediately, this day can be considered the end of the organized Polish army. Next was the cleanup. On September 17, the government left the country. So the unwillingness of the French and British to get involved in the defense of an already non-existent state is quite understandable.

So the question is: why did they even need to declare this war if they were not going to fight? There are different versions of the answer. The most frivolous is the fulfillment of previously given promises. The Great Powers had already given guarantees to Czechoslovakia after the Munich Agreement - did this help much in the spring of 1939? And the promises given the Poles, they also did not comply ...

Hitler claimed that the British and French had declared war to "save face," adding the enigmatic phrase: "Besides, that doesn't mean they're going to fight." Did he know something? As for the "face" - by that time it was long and hopelessly lost (and the Franco-German military operations, nicknamed the "strange war",

did not contribute to the acquisition of "face"). Keeping it is like taking care of your virginity after a year of working in a brothel.

The version of the struggle for influence in Europe is also not very rolling. On the one hand, Hitler was a consistent Anglophile. Starting with Mein Kampf, he never ceased declaring his love for England, considering her a natural ally of Germany in Europe. On the other hand, the great powers initially had nothing against Germany expanding its influence to the east. Back in 1923, a demonstrative conversation took place between the Polish representative at the negotiations in Genoa and the then British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain. The former tried to convince the British that a strong Poland was in the interests of England. In response, he heard that nothing of the sort: a strong Poland would interfere with Germany's expansion to the east, in which England was interested. In 1937, the same Chamberlain became Prime Minister. Hitler, in full accordance with the plans announced by the British, is going to move east - why fight something? What is the answer? There is

no answer - but there is a hypothesis. Let's put aside our afterthought and think: what could be the plans of the European powers in the first half of 1939? Well, they will feed Poland to Germany - and then what?

Further plans could only be in line with the main ones: to pit Germany and the USSR and finish off the weakened winner. Which, nine out of ten, will be Hitler. But simply, without any reason, without a political crisis, it would be ugly to stab him in the back. It is desirable that this happen in a natural way, best of all - protecting a small and weak state. For example, like this: Hitler attacks such a state, the great powers declare war on it. And being in a state of war, they can calmly, without explanation, strike at any moment when it is convenient.

But this is only half the answer. In this scenario, it was impossible not to take into account that Hitler would figure out the plan and use it himself - as it eventually happened. Why didn't they think in Paris that Hitler, having dealt with the Poles, could turn not to the east, but to the west? This was demanded by the national vanity, severely infringed after the First World War, and it would be nice to secure the old

enemy before fighting a new one. Especially if this old enemy can at any moment, without looking for reasons, stab in the back.

It seems that in the minds of Europe there was a strong certainty: after Poland, Hitler would go to war with the Soviet Union.

And you know, it might even be! In the mid-1930s, a turn took place in the Soviet Union. It was observed in many areas of life, including in foreign policy. In September 1934, the USSR joined the League of Nations and since then has taken an active part in European politics. He was not launched - but he accepted. He tried to put together collective security systems against Germany - they fell apart, and he tried again. He was even ready to send troops to help Czechoslovakia - but only Poland did not miss it - what a pity! (Interestingly, did Stalin **really** assume, even for a second, that the cordon sanitaire states would let the Red Army into the heart of Europe?) In general, by 1939, the Soviet Union had a strong reputation as an adversary of Germany, fussily trying to put together an anti-German bloc, offering all opponents of Hitler a military help. True, these proposals always ran into Poland's ironclad refusal to let the Red Army through its territory. Poland, by the way, was also offered help, which the Poles arrogantly rejected.

Now let's imagine a simple and beautiful political move. The Polish-German war

begins. The Soviet government habitually, with full confidence in the refusal of the proud gentlemen, offers them military assistance. And the gentlemen ... agree! And the Soviet-German war begins by itself. Like in 1914, when Russia got involved in the war, protecting small and weak Serbia.

Why not a version? None are worse than others. On one condition: if we manage to forget about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Completely forget, not know - just as those who made military and political plans in the spring of 1939 did

not know about him. However, even if such calculations existed, they ran into one obstacle. He has a first name, middle name and last name, which we all know very well.

So, events in Europe developed in the best way for the USSR. The two main enemies of our country, Germany and Poland, instead of uniting to attack us, were clearly going to grab each other's throats. And here Stalin abruptly changes his foreign policy. Where has the fussy organizer of European destinies gone? The Soviet leader begins to act quickly, harshly, in the interests of only his country, and very insidiously. In May 1939, a subtle internal event took place in the Soviet Union. Stalin

dismissed Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and purged his People's Commissariat. Comrade Litvinov was a most interesting man! An old Bolshevik, back in 1905 he participated in the smuggling of weapons to Russia, then lived in London for ten years and later was regularly used by the Soviet government when it was necessary to clarify relations with the British. He was not arrested, not tried - he was simply dismissed, moreover, he was later used in diplomatic work. But the very fact that in May 1939 a person so closely connected with London was eliminated from the People's Commissariat and his supporters were purged out is interesting, isn't it? Why in May, and how is this personnel transfer related to what happened next?

Could it be, for example, such a move: until some time, the British were pitted against the NKID with information about the intentions of the Soviet government, and then this channel was blocked in order to sharply change policy at the right time and deliver an unexpected blow? At the same time, Comrade Litvinov could be used "in the dark" ... (However, judging by the fact that this cunning son of a Jewish merchant went as an plenipotentiary to the United States at the outbreak of the war, they absolutely trusted him.) Could the Soviet

leader pull off such a combination? Yes Easy! Within the framework of what we know about Stalin today, it is very possible. That's just in 1939 what we know today in Europe

no one knew yet.

And the blow was struck. Throughout the spring, sluggish negotiations were going on about guarantees to the Eastern European countries in the event of German aggression, about helping England and France if they were drawn into a war with Germany. Ours insisted on a tripartite agreement with equal obligations of the parties, the Europeans, of course, wanted to get

Soviet assistance, but not to provide it to us. Everyone agreed that in the event of an attack it was necessary to help Poland, but the Poles themselves refused any help from their eastern neighbor. These negotiations continued in the summer, although rather sluggishly and clearly without hope of success. Even in the summer of 1939, just before the start of the war, an Anglo-French delegation was sitting in Moscow, still chewing on the problems of collective security in Europe.

But in parallel, immediately after the resignation of Litvinov, the sounding of the soil began to improve Soviet-German relations, culminating in the signing of the famous non-aggression pact on August 23 (aka the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact). That was a political bomb! This document is still one of the most hated political steps by the "world community", to the point that on its basis at one time they tried to declare Stalin and Hitler equally guilty of unleashing the Second World War. Still: some Georgian, a wild man, so outplayed cunning European politicians. It's embarrassing, right? It's still embarrassing!

In Russia, European grievances were embodied in a strange point of view: they say, it was impossible to negotiate with Hitler. Why not? Because he is Hitler! Exactly. Well, no one can

judge who Hitler is better than us. Tem
Nevertheless, in a speech on July 3, 1941, Stalin said on this occasion:

"It may be asked: how could it happen that the Soviet government agreed to conclude a non-aggression pact with such treacherous people and monsters as Hitler and Ribbentrop? Was there a mistake on the part of the Soviet government here? Of course not! A non-aggression pact is a peace pact between states. It was this pact that Germany proposed to us in 1939. Could the Soviet government refuse such an offer? I think that not a single peace-loving state can refuse a peace agreement with a neighboring power, if at the head of this power there are even such monsters and cannibals as Hitler and Ribbentrop.

And what can be objected to such an approach? At the same time, the Soviet government managed to

turn things around in such a way that the Soviet Union received the main benefits from the pact. Don't believe? Let's

let's count.

What did Hitler get? Security during the showdown with Poland and France from a purely virtual Soviet threat - for more than anything, Stalin did not want to get into a European war. Even the USSR supplied Hitler with a certain amount of food and strategic raw materials (not for that, for money). And it's all. And what did the pact

bring to the Soviet Union? Firstly, a precious opportunity not to get involved in a European war - almost two years of delay. Secondly, the USSR, bloodlessly and without straining, returned the Ukrainian and Belarusian lands annexed by the Poles in 1921, Bessarabia seized by the Romanians. Thirdly, he received the Baltic states and Finland in his sphere of influence - the Germans pledged not to interfere, no matter what our people did there. Even the notorious deliveries, and those were balanced by a mutual obligation to supply us with any, at our choice, military technology. The only damage was the curtailment of anti-fascist rhetoric - but, in the end, this can be reconciled.

So, who beat who here?

Naturally, Stalin did not even think of being friends with Hitler. On September 7, 1939, at a meeting with the leadership of the Comintern, he declared with captivating cynicism: ***“A war is going on between two groups of capitalist countries ... for the redivision of the world, for domination of the world! We don't mind if they fight well and weaken each other... We can maneuver, push one side against the other, so that they better tear...”*** And that's

how it happened! The Soviet Union was most worried about European security, but it turned out that England and France declared war on Hitler. The cunning Europeans fell into their own trap. Hitler, taking advantage of the state of war, attacked France and heavily bombed Britain. And the USSR remained on the sidelines. If the French army turned out to be better, we could get a reprieve for three, and maybe even four years. But and two is fine too.

And if anyone believes that the USSR, according to the traditions of the Russian Empire, had to sacrifice itself, arranging European affairs, let them first explain why this was necessary.

... And the Soviet Union began to prepare in full swing for a future war with Germany, about which no one was still deceived.

Almost immediately, our government took up the Finnish problem. We remind you: Finland was a state that was sharply aggressive towards the USSR, with serious territorial claims. It is clear that in a future war she will not come out on our side. And the border with it, by the way, passed 30 kilometers from Leningrad. For the infantry - one day's journey. It was high time to remember that the Russian tsar transferred the Vyborg province to the Principality of Finland in 1811

(he might not have transferred it, by the way), to demand the return of the present and move the border back. The Finns were offered a slightly larger territory in Karelia in return. When they did not want to change, the issue was resolved by force. During this war, the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations - however, that League was of no use, like from a goat's milk, it had not decided anything for a long time and

meant nothing.

Then came the Anschluss of the Baltics... Still, we underestimate Comrade Stalin! See how competently he applied European precedents. Western Ukraine and Belarus were annexed to the USSR exactly according to the same mechanism as the Czech Sudetenland to Germany. With the Munich agreement, the European powers had to swallow that too. Moreover: Hitler tore off the territory from the living state, and the Soviet troops entered the territory of Poland the day after the Polish government fled abroad. The USSR annexed the Baltic States in the same way as Germany annexed Austria. With the difference that the Anschluss of Austria was carried out on a national

basis, and the Baltic states - on a class basis. But the Soviet Union is the motherland of all working people. What questions can there be? There were no questions, especially since in all cases there was an expression of the will of the people, that is, a referendum. However, these territories are like a bun: someone would certainly eat it. If the Baltic states had remained independent and the Germans would have reached Leningrad in a week along its territory, as if on rails, our awareness of their high decency would have helped little: wow, they could have eaten a bun - and they didn't.

As for the complaints of the Baltic neighbors about the "Soviet occupation", they only mean that they did not manage to get all the benefits of this war. Together with Hitler, they could rob the USSR, and then, if the Fuhrer was not lucky, they would be "liberated", leaving the loot as compensation for the "German occupation". But - it didn't work out. Happens...

After Poland, Hitler had no choice: now he could only go west. If you turn to the east, then France will certainly cling to the ass at the most inopportune moment. The USSR is bound by a pact, and it is not profitable for him to be the first to start a war. It's good for him to wait

get ready.

"What have we gained by concluding a non-aggression pact with Germany? We ensured peace for our country for a year and a half and the possibility of preparing our forces for a rebuff if fascist Germany dared to attack our country in defiance of the pact. This is a definite win for us and a loss for fascist Germany."

Chapter

2 Was the attack sudden?

The legend of a surprise attack was put into circulation back in the Khrushchev era, and it turned out to be surprisingly tenacious: refuted fifty times, it still raises its head. Like, Stalin believed Hitler and, accordingly, did not believe the warnings about an impending war, therefore he forbade putting troops on alert, etc. True, there is not a single concrete fact testifying to trust, but it is believed that he believed. Well, Marshal Zhukov himself said this, and Khrushchev confirmed it. How about really? In August 1940, the Chief of

the General Staff of

the Red Army, Marshal Shaposhnikov, presented to the government "Considerations on the fundamentals of the strategic deployment of the armed forces of the USSR." The very first section of this document says: ***"The current political situation in Europe creates the likelihood of an armed***

clash on our western borders. This armed clash may be limited only to our western borders, but the possibility of an attack by Japan on our Far Eastern borders is not ruled out.

On our western borders, Germany will be the most likely adversary, but as for Italy, her participation in the war is possible, or rather, her performance in the Balkans, creating an indirect threat to us. An armed clash between the USSR and Germany can involve Finland and Romania, and possibly Hungary, into a military conflict with us - with the aim of revenge ... With the likely armed neutrality on the part of Iran and Afghanistan, an open action against the USSR by Turkey is possible, inspired by

the Germans.

Thus, the Soviet Union needs to be ready to fight on two fronts: in the West against Germany, supported by Italy, Finland and Romania, and possibly Turkey, and in the East against Japan as an open enemy or

an enemy who takes a position of armed neutrality, always able to go into an open clash”[3] . Based on these —

considerations, the operational plans of the Red Army were developed, including plans for covering the borders. All of them were sanctioned by Stalin, who "did not believe" in the German attack, and, for better or worse, they were put into practice.

Constant monitoring of Hitler's actions was carried out by Soviet intelligence. True, it is believed that Stalin did not believe her - just as he did not believe Richard Sorge, who announced that the war would begin on June 22. However, the rough reality, as usual, spoiled it: in fact, the famous Sorge telegram simply did not exist, it was invented by journalists in the 60s. (This is such an audience - they can come up with something else). Moreover, such a telegram could not even exist. Hitler had a habit of constantly postponing the date of the attack - before the French campaign, he did this 26 times in six months! He signed the order for the attack (which could very well have been canceled) on June 10, and the troops began to advance to their starting lines on the 18th. So consider: the information was supposed to reach Japan, get to Sorge, be transmitted by radio to the Far East, delivered to Moscow ... How are we with the timing? But there were many

other messages. About Hitler's intentions are our scouts informed constantly and unambiguously.

Back in November 1940, the GUGB of the NKVD reported: ***“During the period of operations in France, the German command kept up to 27 infantry divisions and 6 cavalry regiments in East Prussia and former Poland. After the capitulation of France [4], the German command began in early July 1940 to mass transfer of its troops from the west to the east and southeast, as a result of which in East Prussia and former Poland it was concentrated: on July 16 - up to 40 infantry divisions and more 2 tank divisions; on July 23 - up to 50 infantry divisions and over 4 tank divisions; on August 8 - up to 54 infantry divisions and up to 6***

tank divisions. In the second half of August and throughout September, the transfer of German troops from France to the east continued. As of October 1, 70 infantry divisions, 5 motorized divisions, 7-8 tank divisions and 19 cavalry regiments were concentrated in East Prussia and on the territory of former Poland, which, in c

a month gives an increase of 8 infantry divisions, 2 motorized

divisions ... Thus, in total, more than 85 divisions are concentrated against the USSR, that is, more than one third of the ground forces of the German

army. It is characteristic that the bulk of the infantry formations (up to 60 divisions) and all tank and motorized divisions are located in the border zone with the USSR in a dense grouping ... "[5]

In fact, at that time there were far fewer German troops near our border. But these are quantitative questions, but what is the fact? The Germans really transferred their troops from west to east, and the scouts regularly informed about this. If the Fuhrer was not going to fight, why drive soldiers across Europe? Or does he have a lot of extra money for these excursions?

The next six months, the concentration continued, and in Germany the situation was appropriate: the Germans were psychologically prepared for war. And there were enough of our scouts. Here is an ordinary message coming from one of the many agents of the INO NKVD in Berlin in October 1940: ***"Our***

agent ... working in the German Ministry of Economy ... in a conversation with an officer of the headquarters of the High Command, learned that at the beginning of next year Germany would start a war against the Soviet Union ... The aim of the war is to seize from the Soviet Union a part of the European territory of the USSR from Leningrad to the Black Sea and to create on this territory a state entirely dependent on Germany. In the rest of the Soviet Union, according to these plans, a "Germany-friendly government" should be created"[6] . —

Another message from the Berlin residency, dated December 1940: ***"The main issue***

that deserves attention is Hitler's speech on December 18 at the Sport Palace, regarding the release of 5,000 German officers. According to the Lesovod agent, Hitler made an attack "against the injustice that exists in the world, when 60 million Great Russians own 1/6 of the globe, and about 90 million Germans huddle on a piece of land." Hitler urged young officers to eliminate this injustice . —

... A lot of information was supplied from Berlin by the famous agents "Corsican" and "Foreman", who covered in detail the preparations for the war. So, in one of the March messages it is said: **"... German aviation operations on aerial photographs of Soviet territory are being carried out at full speed. German planes fly to the Soviet side from airfields in Bucharest, Königsberg and Kirkenes (northern Norway) and take photographs from a height of 6000 meters. In particular, the Germans filmed Kronstadt. The shooting gave good results"[8] .**

The data came not only from Berlin. It was reported from Warsaw: German soldiers and officers openly talk about the imminent war, German troops are moving eastward in a continuous stream through the city. From Finland: the Germans promise the Finns Karelia and the Kola Peninsula in exchange for cooperation. In Romania, large airfields are being built near the border, and officers of the Romanian army were given maps of the regions of the USSR. In Shanghai, a high official who arrived from Berlin told the Germans there: in Germany, public, naval and high-ranking civilian circles believe that the war with the Soviet Union will be a triumphal march and last three months. Etc.,
and so on...

These are just messages from out-of-band illegals, a tiny part of the intelligence community. But intelligence has many levels. The republican NKVD, the Internal Affairs Directorate of the border regions, border detachments, and military districts conducted their intelligence activities. Information to Moscow did not go in reports - for kilometers - and sometimes contained very interesting facts. Here are excerpts from the reports of the NKVD of the last pre-war month:

***NKVD of the Ukrainian
SSR. June 2, 1941 "In Germany, small groups of infantry, cavalry, trucks and cars, as well as horse-drawn vehicles are advancing towards the border strip. Officers are carrying out enhanced surveillance of our territory ... East of Janow Podlaski, pontoons have been
prepared in the forest to force the Bug River, and 20***

wooden bridges to replace existing ones in case of destruction. 2 motorized rifle regiments are stationed in Grubeshov.

According to a survey of border trespassers... German servicemen among the population declare: "The USSR broke the peace treaty with Germany and entered into a tripartite alliance with England and America, intends to declare war on Germany." The servicemen express their confidence in Germany's victory over the USSR and the capture of Soviet Ukraine"[9]. June 2 on the calendar. The —

order to start the campaign will be signed by Hitler only after 8 days, and the German soldiers are told that the USSR has **already** broken the peace treaty. You can't just throw a soldier into battle, he's not a robot, you need psychological preparation. Here the Germans were vulnerable.

NKVD of Moldova. June 2, 1941

"According to intelligence data from the border troops of the NKVD of the Moldavian SSR, on May 15 this year, the commander of the 5th military district of Romania received an order from General Antonescu to immediately clear all bridges, roads and sections near the border of the USSR, mined in 1940–1941. At present, almost all bridges have been demined and demining of areas adjacent to the river has begun. Rod.

Among a narrow circle of officers of the Romanian border guard there are statements that supposedly the Romanian command and the German command on June 8 of this year intend to start military operations against the USSR, for which large parts of the German and Romanian armies are being pulled up to the border line ...

... The Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered all local authorities to prepare institutions for their evacuation to the rear of Romania"[10].

—

... the NKVD of the USSR. June

2, 1941 "... The border detachments of the NKVD of the Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Moldavian SSR obtained the following information about the military activities of the Germans near the border with the USSR ...

Two army groups are concentrated in the regions of Tomashov and Lezhaisk. Headquarters of two armies were found in these areas: the headquarters of the 16th army in Ulyanuv (85 km southwest of Lublin) and the army head

the Usmezh estate (45 km southwest of Vladimir-Volynsky), commanded by General Reichenau (requires clarification) ... On May 17, a group of pilots arrived in

Terespol, and one hundred bombers were delivered to the airfield in Voskshenitsa (near Terespol). ... The generals of the German army carry out reconnaissance near

the border ... In many points near the border, pontoons, canvas and inflatable boats are concentrated. The largest number of them was noted in the directions to Brest and Lviv ...

... Holidays for servicemen from parts of the German army prohibited.

In addition, information was received about the transfer of German troops from Budapest and Bucharest in the direction of the borders with the USSR... "[11]

This is what real intelligence reports look like - in the form of microscopic facts that are summarized, checked and rechecked, and not in the form of telegrams, like: "The war will begin on June 22!" Such telegrams are cinema, and not of the highest order.

NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.

June 6, 1941 "According to the observation of the 91st Rava-Russian border detachment, the appearance of large tank formations of the German army is noted in the border

strip ... Officers arrived at the border, presumably

gunners... According to the operational data of the 97th Chernivtsi border detachment, the Germans are intensively preparing for war with the USSR on the

territory of Romania. In the regions of Kampulung, Vatra Dornei, Kirli Baba, Iasi, Botosani and Dorohoy, 200 wagons with ammunition, military equipment, equipment, food and fodder arrive daily from Germany through Hungary. All reserves are concentrated

along the railway line between the mountains, under the sheds of temporary warehouses, of which there are several hundred from Vatra Dornei to Dornesti.

Long-range guns were installed at the edge of the forest southeast of Dorohoy.

... On June 2, 1941, in the evening in Suceava, in the headquarters of the division, the Germans staged a ball, to which Romanian

officers were invited. At the evening, the German general, addressing the officers, said: "Gentlemen, the hour has come to return Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and take Ukraine away with the combined forces. That is our goal in the struggle against communism."

... The Romanian government issued an order - after exams in schools from June 15, 1941, in order to deploy troops, use all school buildings. In lyceums, some buildings are already occupied by hospitals.

In Romania, a partial mobilization of people aged 45 is carried out. Army units are recruited according to the states of wartime. The mobilization of the cavalry is underway ... "

With such reports, it is not at all difficult for a qualified staff officer to calculate the approximate date for the start of the war. However, we will talk about the date later - it is really calculated quite easily. For now, let's continue reading the reports.

UNKGB of the Ukrainian SSR in the Lvov region.

On June 12, 1941, "The railway station switchman Zhuravitsa Kovalsky told our source" Kovalevsky ": "

The Germans are intensively preparing for a war with the Soviet Union, for which they are pulling up a large number of military units to the border line, building fortifications and trenches along the entire border, lining them inside boards."

... The source "Pavlovich" learned from the wagon inspector Zozulya that along the border of the San River between the villages of the German territory Bolestrasche and Gurka, the Germans had prepared special crossing bridges disguised with

trees. ... In the depot of Zhuravitsa station there are 7 broad gauge steam locomotives, and 3 of them are under steam around the clock. These locomotives were prepared specifically for the event of

hostilities with the Soviet Union "From the conversations of German soldiers and officers, it can be concluded that the Germans are preparing an attack on the Soviet Union ... A complete replacement

local railway workers by arrivals military railway parts".

... In a conversation with a source "Lug", the wagon inspector Zozulya said that all Ukrainians who serve in the German army are obligatory trained in parachuting ... Students are also taught to parachute various types of weapons, up to anti-tank guns. ... A special machine was brought to Zhuravitsa

station, which is capable of altering 100 m of broad gauge track for an hour narrow.

In a conversation on June 3, 1941, Zozulya told the source

"Vladimirov" the following: "At the Zhuravitsa station, the Germans prepared three light-type iron disassembled bridges for crossing the San River. On the night of June 3, 1941, more than 1,000 German soldiers arrived at Zhuravitsa station. Between Przemyśl and Rzeszów, the Germans concentrated a large number of military units. All this happens because, as the Germans explain, the German government presented the Soviet Union with a demand for the passage of German troops through the territory of the USSR to Iran, but the Soviet Union refused. Then the Germans issued an ultimatum with a threat: if the troops were not

A supporter of "defending" Germany would not fail to pay special attention to the trenches that the Germans dug on their territory - since the trenches, it means that they were preparing not to attack, but to defend themselves. However, trenches are also needed in case something goes wrong. But the broad gauge steam locomotives and the machine for its alteration clearly testify: the Germans are preparing for the offensive. The Russian gauge was wider than the European one, and since the Germans brought locomotives, it means that they are not going to defend themselves from the mythical offensive of the Red Army, but to fight on our land. In full accordance with Mein Kampf...

... And here is a quote from the special report of the NKGB of the BSSR dated June 19. Here everything is already simple, in plain text: "In connection with the preparatory measures for the war with the Soviet Union ..."

“... In connection with the preparatory measures for the war with the Soviet Union, German intelligence agencies have intensified the transfer of agents to our side in recent days By interrogation of

saboteurs, it has been established that German intelligence is striving to start hostilities between Germany and the USSR to cut off the movement of Red Army units by railroads, why carry out sabotage at the following strategic points As the saboteurs show, the

start date for hostilities is set for the first days of July ... and they received the task, if the war does not start before August 1, to carry out sabotage regardless of the circumstances and return back to Germany. ... In addition to committing an act of sabotage,

Gordievich and Chuduk had to maintain contact with German aircraft during the first days of the war, for which intelligence provided them with the appropriate cloth ... "[13] Can we say after this that someone did not know —

something? “No, of course they knew,” our opponent will answer, “but Stalin himself did not believe and forbade others, he wrote obscene resolutions, in which he was supported by Beria.” Resolutions are an

interesting thing. Let's start with Berievskaya. A memorandum is circulating in various works, which he allegedly wrote on June 21, 1941:

“I again insist on the recall

and punishment of our ambassador to Berlin, Dekanozov, who continues to bombard me with “misinformation” about an allegedly impending attack on the USSR. Major General V. I. Tupikov, the military attache in Berlin, also radioed the same. This stupid general claims that the three army groups of the Wehrmacht will advance on Moscow, Leningrad and Kyiv. But I and my people, Iosif Vissarionovich, firmly remember your wise plan: in 1941 Hitler will not attack us.”

All this, of course, is very nice - but it was not possible to find this memorandum in any archive. The content also raises a lot of questions. Why does Beria call the plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Germany "ambassador"? Why on earth does this "ambassador" send reports to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, and not

Commissar Molotov? (The latter, by the way, would not like this practice very much, and he had more weight in the state than Lavrenty Pavlovich.) And even more so, why does the military attaché, a representative of a competing structure - military intelligence, send the same reports? I don't even want to imagine how Comrade Timoshenko, military marshal, would react to such an initiative of his subordinate People's Commissar of Defense. And the nasty People's Commissar of Internal Affairs not only receives reports that are not due to him, but also demands to punish their authors, while showing a truly stupid sense of humor, in the spirit of cheap clowning.

In a word - fake, gentlemen! And there is nothing to discuss here. But with the famous unprintable resolution of Stalin on one of the reports of the NKGB, the issue is much more interesting. Its text, it seems, will soon be included in school textbooks: ***"T-shchu Merkulov. You can send your "source" from the headquarters of the german aviation to ... mother. This is not a "source",***

but a disinformers. I. St. " Indeed, the report refers to the preparation of Germany for war. But it is long and contains many points. "The source at the headquarters of the German aviation is the famous agent of the NKGB "Starshina" (Ober Lieutenant Harro Schulze-Boysen, an employee of the communications department of the German Ministry of Aviation). He reports the

"1. All German military measures to prepare for an armed uprising against the USSR have been completely completed, and a strike can be expected at

any time. 2. In the circles of the aviation headquarters, the TASS message of June 6[14] was perceived very ironically. Emphasize that cannot matter.

3. The objects of German air raids will primarily be: the Svir-3 power plant, Moscow factories producing individual (electrical equipment, ball bearings, tires), as well as car repair

parts to aircraft

workshops.

4. Hungary will take an active part in hostilities on the side of Germany. Part of the German aircraft, mainly fighters, is already on Hungarian airfields.

5. Important German aircraft repair shops are located in Königsberg, Gdynia, Graudenz, Breslau, Marienburg.

Milich aircraft engine workshops - in Poland, in Warsaw - Ochachi and especially important ones - in

Heiligenkeil "[15] . What in this message could cause such an emotional reaction from Stalin? We, of course, consider that this is point 1. Why? Yes, because Stalin forbade mentioning the impending attack. And where did they get what was forbidden? How - where? Yes, here it is, the resolution! In vain you laugh, the logic of the supporters of the "surprise attack" is exactly that.

Personally, point 3 is of much greater interest to me. Re-read it again and try to imagine the process of bombing Moscow factories, given that a) the vast majority of German bombers will not reach Moscow; b) those that do get there will find themselves without fighter cover, since the latter will not reach accurately; c) from the height at which bombers will operate without fighters, not only to an auto repair shop, but as if not to miss the city itself! (By the way, in reality, the first air raid on Moscow took place on July 23.) It is not surprising that, after reading this message, Stalin unequivocally expressed to Comrade Merkulov, People's

Commissar for State Security, a wish not to push his duties of sorting information onto the head of state.

By the way, the report contains data received from another agent - "Corsican" (Dr. Arvid Harnak):

"A source working in the German Ministry of Economy reports that the appointment of the heads of the military economic departments of the "future districts" of the occupied territory of the USSR has been made, namely: Ammon, one of the leading workers of the National Socialist Party in Dusseldorf, has been appointed for the Caucasus; for Kyiv - Burandt, a former employee of the Ministry of Economy, who until recently worked in the economic department in France; for Moscow - Burger, head of the economic chamber in Stuttgart. All these persons are enrolled in military service and left for Dresden, which is a collection point.

Schlotterer, the head of the foreign department of the Ministry of Economy, who is currently in Berlin, has been appointed for the general management of the economic administration of the "occupied territories of the

USSR". The Ministry of Economy says that Rosenberg also spoke at meetings of business executives intended for the "occupied territories of the USSR", who said that the concept of the "Soviet Union" should be erased from the geographical map.

For some reason, Stalin obscenely did not comment on this information. I wonder why, if he did not believe in a German attack? Exhausted the supply of profanity in the first half of the report?

... In a word, they knew about the war - and they could not help but know. You can't hide an army of three million under a bush. If so, why didn't they prepare for

it? And here we are waiting for very interesting surprises ...

Chapter

3 On the Question of Combat Readiness

The Moscow historian G. Kumanev in one of his books cites a completely marvelous episode from the post-war biography of Marshal Zhukov. ***“In accordance with the***

strict instructions of Stalin, any initiative on the part of the commanders of the districts and armies to put the cover troops on alert began to be immediately suppressed by the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff. Characteristic in this regard is a telegram sent on June 10, 1941 by the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, to the commander of the Kiev Special Military District, Colonel-General M.P. Kirponos, canceling the order to occupy the foreground. Speaking on August 13, 1966, in the editorial office of the Military Historical Journal, G.K. Zhukov said on this occasion: “Stalin found out that the Kiev district began to deploy the army on the call of Tymoshenko ... Beria immediately ran to Stalin and said, well, they say the military does not comply, they provoke ... they occupy battle formations. Stalin immediately called Timoshenko and gave him a proper thrashing. This beat went down to me “What are you watching? Immediately withdraw the troops, name the perpetrators. Well, it's gone. And other commanders did not dare. “Give the order,” they said. And who will give the order? Here, for example, I, Zhukov, feeling the danger looming over the country, give the order: “Deploy”. Stalin is reported. On what basis? “Come on, Beria, take him to your basement...” [16] Such an order really existed and was canceled – here Comrade Zhukov tells the truth. But in all other respects ... How it really happened, the researcher Oleg Kozinkin unearthed and told in his book “Two Plans of Marshal

Zhukov”. So, here is the document itself:

“To the Military Council of the Kyiv Regional Military District, w / n, 10.6.41

The head of the border troops of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR reported that the heads of the fortified areas were instructed to occupy the foreground. For a report, report to the People's Commissar of Defense on what basis parts of the fortified areas of the KOVO were ordered to occupy the foreground. Such an action can provoke the Germans into an armed clash and is fraught with all sorts of consequences. Immediately cancel such an order and report who specifically gave such an unauthorized order. Zhukov". What from the district to Moscow on the

same day flew completely

a wonderful response from the commander of the Kirponos district:

"... I report that the reinforced concrete structures and part of the bunkers of the battalion districts No. 7, 8, 9, 10 of the field construction in 1940 in the Kovel UR are occupied by the personnel of two battalions of the Kovel UR according to a cipher telegram signed by comrade. Vatutin No. 9/485 from 4.6 p. d. In all other URs, field structures are not occupied anywhere. Today I gave the order to withdraw the garrisons from the firing points of the Kovel UR, remote from the state border up to 3 km and, regardless of the distance, from all observed from the German side. The order to the commandant of the Kovel UR was signed by the chief of staff Purkaev. I ask you to

indicate whether to continue to garrison the firing lines of the Vladimir-structures *By* ***Volynsky, Strumilovsky, Rava-Russian and Przemyśl URs on the front line.***

Translated into normal human language, it sounds like this: "Why are you occupying fortified areas?" "So you yourself ordered us! You already there decide somehow what you want ... "What a charm!

Why Zhukov, in his story a quarter of a century later, replaced Vatutin's cipher telegram with Timoshenko's call is understandable. Vatutin was the chief of the operations department of the General Staff, so the order to occupy the firing positions had to be sanctioned by the chief of the General Staff. Who was the leader then? Wow! The same Marshal Zhukov, who a week later asked Kirponos why he occupied firing structures. It somehow turns out inconveniently: either the headquarters is a mess and the chief does not know what his own operational department is doing, or that chief is a two-faced bastard who scolds the district commander for carrying out his own order.

Marshal, of course, in 1966 and in a nightmare would not have dreamed that this story would someday become public, but subconsciously she apparently tormented him. The transfer of shooters to the people's commissar removed this inconvenience: the people's commissar could not inform the head of the General Staff. True, Kirponos turns out to be good in his story, who began to carry out such an order on a call, without requiring any confirmations recorded on paper, at least the same cipher telegram! But Kirponos died back in forty-one, anything could be blamed on him. What really happened?

The military, presumably, simply freaked out, tired of waiting for the war. They drove the garrisons to firing points, the border guards noticed, reported, Beria, realizing the danger of such maneuvers in the mind of the enemy, ran to Stalin, the perpetrators received a portion of matyukov from the leader, parts of the firing points were removed. In general, a working moment ... But appreciate the

scope of speculation! Two battalions turned into the entire district, which began the "deployment of the army", and the ban on occupying the firing positions of the URs turned into a ban on putting troops on alert.

Zhukov returned to this topic more than once, and with his submission it became a commonplace. For example, in a draft speech at the CPSU plenum on May 19, 1956,

he writes: ***"Due to Stalin's ignorance of the clear threat of an attack by fascist Germany on the Soviet Union, our Armed Forces were not put on alert in a timely manner, by the time the enemy struck, they were not deployed, and they were not tasked with being ready to repel the enemy's impending attack, so that, as Stalin said, 'not to provoke the Germans to war.'*** What a passage! So: the

troops were not put on alert, were not deployed, or were they not assigned a task? Let's postpone the last two points for later, let's talk about the first one for now: "they were not put on alert in a timely manner."

And what kind of animal is this - combat readiness? Army wisdom says: an order that can be misunderstood will be misunderstood. So every used

military, the concept should be saturated with a specific meaning, reaching every cook and every clip of cartridges.

A short study of this issue led to very interesting results. It turns out that combat readiness is different. RVS Directive No. 61582ss of April 29,

1934 established three positions in the Red Army: normal, enhanced, and full readiness. The latter assumed the following list of activities[17]:
“a) if the units were in camps, they return to winter quarters; b)

—
non-stock weapons [18], fire supplies, equipment, uniforms for the first echelons are issued to the subunits and brought to readiness;

c) in tank and tank units, discs with combat cartridges are invested in cars; d) all

personnel are transferred to the barracks; e) transportable stocks of firearms, fuel, food forage for the 1st mob. echelons fit into the convoy;

e) the 1st mob is organizationally drawn up.

echelon; g) units occupy points, unless there are special orders from the command troops, the least dangerous in relation to surprise attacks from the air, and the most convenient for pulling into columns for marching to areas where a

combat mission is being carried out; h) non-reserve cards are handed out to the command staff; i) “BS” gas masks

are handed out, the elements are filled with water; j) all organizational and prep measures to mobilize the second mob. echelons "

What follows from this list? If the units are not put on alert, then with the outbreak of war, the commanders must rush to the warehouses for ammunition, fuel, equipment, maps, etc. But it is known that they did not rush to the warehouses, but began to fight. So they had it all. Consequently, the units **were** put on alert. Marshal Zhukov is a little cunning here,

confusing the concepts of "combat readiness" and "combat alert".
If the unit is brought into combat

readiness, she must be ready to act as soon as possible on an alarm signal. In 1941, this period was set at 2-3 hours. And why then occupy the URs on June 10 and sit in stuffy concrete casemates, waiting for the start of the war, if there are no signs of its beginning yet, and it is possible to raise a unit on alarm in a few hours? And there is such a thing as the combat

readiness of the district. In this case, parts of the state border cover act on alarm - they are mobilized, have everything they need in their warehouses and are the first to enter the battle. And in the depths of the districts, the cadre units are just beginning to accept assigned staff, which should arrive on mobilization, while mobilization is announced only after the start of the war.

According to Zhukov, it turns out that the units of the Red Army were engaged in scrubbing the floors in the barracks and helping the collective farmers in the fields, they did not prepare for the war at all, and only after a hasty attack ... what? Did you grab rifles?

Already from the list it is clear that bringing a unit to combat readiness is not a one-time action, but a process. For a more detailed explanation, I turned to the writer Valery Belousov, the author of the book *A Handful of Sand*, a former artillery officer. He served at a different time - but it is unlikely that the guns have changed so much since the war. So... ***"Let's talk about what I know. Howitzer***

battalion of 122 mm M-30 howitzers. Divisional artillery level. Always next to the infantry, frankly, in the same battle formation, like the famous "three-inch" in all wars of the late nineteenth - early twentieth century. What do we have here? Three batteries of six guns. Management (scouts, signalmen,

headquarters), rear

services (household, traction, first-aid post). The personnel of about one and a half hundred people ...

What is full combat readiness? 1. To

accept personnel up to the number of staff, namely, six people per gun, drivers for all tractors, a utility platoon ... " Okay, we'll put this item out of brackets. We will assume that the units located near the border have already been mobilized. First point

completed. What's next? "2.

To depreserve tractors, that is, install batteries, refuel vehicles with fuel, water and oil. Usually, due to fire safety, equipment is dry. 3. Scroll through the mechanisms, clean the guns from grease, wash them with kerosene, fill in the hydraulics, pump the pneumatics, get and install the sights (the optics are stored separately).

4. Receive ammunition and bring it to the oksnarvid, that is, finally equip it: remove it from the boxes, wipe it with kerosene, unscrew the stop covers and screw in the fuses, put it back in the boxes, spread it out according to the scales (pluses to pluses, minuses to minuses), immerse in equipment .

5. Get compass, rangefinders, binoculars, radio stations, telephones, cable, check communications, get code tables. The foremen receive dry rations, the drivers fill up their cars. 6. Get personal weapons and ammunition. 7.

Carry out elementary combat coordination, at least a couple of times going out to the landfill, leaving half of the equipment on the road along the way. 8. Shoot task number — .

one[19] It can be said, in the first approximation to combat readiness ... When the "alarm" command is given, everyone grabs clothes, without dressing, runs to the equipment and takes it out of the location to the concentration area.

All this, except, in extreme cases, the last two points, must be done in order to put the battery on alert. But this is not all.

"... For example: I came to the ammunition depot and demanded to give me ammunition. And they tell me, boy, are you not hungover? Yes, on what basis? The fact is that the warehouses are not subordinate to the troops, but to the GAU, and without a command from Moscow they will not give me a single cartridge. And Moscow does not need to command: quickly give the senior officer Belousov V.I. half a back. And the signal comes: "Acacia", for example. At this signal, 72 OF-462 high-explosive fragmentation projectiles, in the configuration, are issued to the third battery of the first division of the 453 MSD. The same with fuel, food, clothing equipment ...

And the cards! How can an artilleryman shoot without a map? So, the necessary sheets are handed out to the staff division already cut and

glued. And in order to find the right sheet in top-secret office work, cut it, glue it and fold it, it takes about two hours. That is, each army service is put

on alert along its line. Before occupying the URs, the soldiers had to receive shells and cartridges, rations and indpacks, water and gas masks. Did everyone also receive this "on a call from Tymoshenko"? Do we have many calls? **"E. P. Does this mean that "combat readiness" is**

the result of a whole series of orders?

V. B. What is the series? Avalanche. Starting from the line of the political department: an order to carry out PPR (party political work) - do not laugh! A very important thing! What slogans to hang up, how to orient the personnel, how to work with agitators, secretaries of the party and Komsomol organizations (remember the similar work with the Germans? - E.P.), **political fighters ... and ending with the order along the line of the DMP (divisional first-aid post) - how much to issue individual dressings packages, how many bags for sanitary instructors. And in the artillery regiment - three divisions. And in the division - two artillery regiments. And also tankmen, signalmen-sappers ... and for each branch of the troops their own bosses, except for the divisional one. There are so many papers that the house can be pasted over instead**

of wallpaper. Moreover, there are specific orders..." Were these specific orders issued? And then! Here, for example, is the directive of the Military Council of the KOVO to the military councils of the 5th, 6th, 12th, 26th armies. Date

"1. In order to reduce the terms of combat readiness of cover units and detachments allocated to support the border troops, carry out the following measures: Rifle,

cavalry and artillery units a) Have a portable supply of rifle cartridges in sealed boxes. For each heavy machine gun, have 50% of the ammunition loaded and packed in boxes and 50% of the equipped magazines for a light machine gun.

Boxes with cartridges, boxes with stuffed tapes and disks should be stored sealed in subdivisions in specially protected premises.

Refresh discs and cartridges periodically, dry tapes. Replacement of stuffed disks for light machine guns should be carried out every two months. b) Store

hand and rifle grenades in sets in warehouses parts in special boxes for each unit.

c) 1/2 ammunition load of artillery shells and mines of the emergency reserve for all parts of the cover must be fully equipped. In units where, prior to the receipt of this directive, more than 1/2 of the ammunition load of artillery shells was finally equipped, their further storage should be left in the equipped form. For military anti-

aircraft artillery to have in final equipped with 1/2 ammunition of non-reserve artillery shells.

Keep shells in locked and sealed limbers and charging boxes. d) Keep military

chemical, engineering and communications property in parts warehouses, kits for each unit.

e) Keep the portable supply of food and personal belongings of the fighters in a prepared form for packing in duffel bags and satchels.

Moreover,

in the warehouses of the unit, store for each unit one daily dacha of food and fodder, prepared for loading into the convoy of the unit.

Kitchens and convoys must be in good condition with the property and spare parts assigned to them. f) Fuel supply for all types

of machines to have two refueling - one poured into the tanks of machines (tractors) and one in tanks (barrels). g) In winter conditions,

all units must be provided with warm linen for the entire composition of the unit, mittens and

camouflage.

Motorized and tank units h) For each combat vehicle in the depots of the unit, have 1/2 ammunition load of non-reserve artillery shells in the fully equipped form and 50% of the ammunition load of cartridges stuffed into belts and disks. In units where, prior to the receipt of this directive, more than 1/2 of the ammunition load of artillery shells was finally equipped, their further storage should continue in the equipped form.

Re-equipping stores to produce every two month.

The laying of shells and equipped magazines in vehicles should be carried out upon the announcement of a combat alert. b) Store all other types of supplies in the order specified for rifle, cavalry and artillery units. c) Fuel supply for all types of machines to have two filling stations - one poured into the tanks of machines (tractors) and one in tanks (barrels). 2. Specially work out the issue of raising the alert of parts cover and support detachments of the border troops.

I set the alert readiness deadlines: for horse-drawn infantry and artillery units - 2 hours; for cavalry, motorized units and mechanized artillery - 3 hours. In winter, the readiness of parts is 3 and 4 hours, respectively. For support units, readiness is 45 minutes ... "[20] . Let us repeat once again: judging by the fact that the—

Red Army entered the battle immediately after the German attack, and did not run to the warehouses, by June 22 the units were put on alert.

Now you can continue the story with the fortified areas, which soon acquired a completely schizophrenic shade. Let's continue reading Kozinkin:

“An attentive reader could notice that the list of fortified areas of the KOVO, at that time safely occupied by garrisons, does not include the two most southern ones. But they were not absent for long - on June 16, again, with the signatures of the Military Council of the KOVO in full force, the following telegram flies to the General Staff: “I ask for permission to occupy the reinforced concrete structures of the first line of these URs with personnel of Kamenetz-Podolsky and Mogilev of Yampolsky UR.” On the document is a long resolution written in black pencil: “The occupation of Kamenetz-Podolsky and Mogilev-Yampolsky URs is allowed. Ostropolsky UR along the old border to prepare for occupation also by UR units for the purpose of training and cohesion. Urgently complete the formation of the UR units for the Kyiv UR, and then prepare the UR for recruitment.” And the signature: “Zhukov, 18.6”. We are inattentive readers and do not know the list of

URs. But you don't need to know the list in order to appreciate the pandemonium: on June 10 it was forbidden, on the 18th it was allowed. It turns out that on the 18th a ban on bringing troops into

combat readiness was removed? But what about Stalin, who until the last hour ignored the threat of attack? What, in general, was going on in those days at the border?

Chapter

4 June 18 - exit to the start

For the first time, this date appeared in the protocols of the trial of the commander of the Western Special Military District, General Pavlov, published back in the early 1990s. Interrogating the chief of communications of the Western Front, Grigoriev, a member of the court asked:

“... You gave the following testimony: “leaving Minsk, the commander of the communications regiment reported to me that the department of the chemical troops did not allow him to take combat gas masks from NZ. The artillery department of the district did not allow him to take cartridges from NZ, and the regiment only has a guard norm of 15 rounds per soldier, and the supply and clothing department did not allow him to take field kitchens from NZ. Thus, even on the afternoon of June 18, the supply departments of the headquarters were not oriented that the war was close ... And after the

telegram of the Chief of the —

General Staff of June 18, the troops of the district were not put on alert. Defendant. All of this is true . ”[21]

And here is an illustration to the story of the writer Belousov, presenting in a new light the reasons for the defeat of the Western Front. What a simple sabotage: to give orders to units and forget about

But, excuse me... how many people told the world that Stalin did not allow the troops to be put on alert right up to the very German attack - and suddenly it turns out that already on June 18, the entire staff apparatus should have known that the war was close, and issue cartridges and gas masks. And perhaps even earlier - after all, the KOVO directive on bringing to combat readiness is dated June 11! Such directives are not written without instructions from Moscow, and Moscow will not give instructions to the KOVO and not to give ZapOVO - the German is going to attack along the entire western border! Is there any evidence

that the movement, deployment, and mobilization of troops really began well in advance? Yes, as much as you want, really!

As early as May 13, Stalin authorized the advance of troops from internal districts to the border. On May

14, the commanders of the districts received an order to develop an updated detailed plan for the defense of the border and send it to the General Staff for approval. Deadline: May 20–25. They did not, of course, - the plans were not approved even a month later. But that doesn't mean they didn't exist.

How are such plans made? The General Staff gives the task, sends it to the districts, from there the task descends lower and lower, to the level regiments.

In accordance with this task, plans for covering the border are developed in the regiments and sent back along the chain. On each floor of a military building, they are summed up, reduced to higher-level plans and passed on. That's still red tape! But the fact that the plans to cover the border were not approved meant only one thing: they did not have time to reach the General Staff. But every regiment commander knew how to act, and could not help but know - after all, he himself made these plans! Such is the parsley ... On

May 27, an order was given for the urgent construction of field front command posts ...

On June 12, the General Staff ordered the advance of troops to the state border - and they began to advance. What is this

date - June 18? She is clearly very important. GS sent directives to the districts constantly, but it was this telegram that was marked in court as a kind of

milestone. The fact is that our intelligence reported: the Nazis ordered the population to leave the border strip by 4.00 am on June 18. This meant that the German troops were beginning to advance to their original positions. The same date marked the Soviet orders - already about the advancement of our troops. Here, for example, is the directive of the headquarters of the Baltic Military District that has been known for a long time.

“In order to quickly bring the theater of military operations of the district to combat readiness, I ORDER:

The commanders of the 8th and

11th armies: a) determine the points for organizing field depots, anti-aircraft mines, explosives and anti-personnel barriers on the site of each army for the installation of certain, provided for by the plan

barriers. To concentrate the specified property in organized warehouses by 21.6.41; b) to

set up minefields, determine the composition of the teams, from where they should be allocated, and their work plan. All this through the border divisions;

c) start harvesting improvised materials (rafts, barges, etc.) for the construction of crossings across the rivers Viliya, Nevvazh, Dubyssa. Set up crossing points together with the operational department of the district headquarters.

Subordinate the 30th and 4th pontoon regiments to the military council of the 11th Army. Regiments to be in full readiness for building bridges across the river. Neman. In a series of exercises, check the conditions for building bridges with these regiments,

achieving the minimum deadlines; f) the commander of the troops of the 8th and 11th armies - in order to destroy the most critical bridges in the strip: the state border and the rear line of Siauliai, Kaunas, r. Neman to reconnoiter these bridges, determine for each of them the number of explosives, demolition teams, and concentrate all means for demolition at the nearest points from them. The plan for the destruction of bridges to approve the military council of the army. Completion date 21.6.41.

7. Commander of the armies and the head of the ABTV district. To create separate platoons of tanks at the expense of each autobattalion, using for this purpose the installation of containers on trucks, the number of separate platoons created is 4.

Deadline - 23.6.41. These individual platoons should be kept in the amount of a mobile reserve: Telshai, Siauliai, Keidany, Ionova at the disposal of the army commanders. e)

Select from among the parts of the district (except for mechanized and aviation) gas tanks and transfer them to 50 percent. in 3 and 12 microns. Completion date

21.6.41; f) Take all measures to provide each machine and tractor with spare parts, and through the chief of the OST with accessories for refueling machines (funnels, buckets).

Pay attention to deadlines? Basically June 21st. And who after can this be said that Moscow did not know the date of the attack?

Here you need to understand this: the district commander himself did not have the authority to give birth to such a directive. She could appear on

light only in pursuance of the relevant directive of the General Staff. Which, of course, was sent not only to the Baltic district, but to all border districts - judging by the protocol of Grigoriev's interrogation - on June 18, 1941.

There is plenty of evidence that the troops were put on alert a few days before the start of the war. We will not consider them in large numbers, we will see only a few. For example, back in 1957, in the "Collection of Combat Documents", among the orders and reports of the first days of the war, one of the pre-war documents somehow got mixed up - either due to an oversight, or, conversely, due to sabotage of the "general line". And what else!

From the order for the 12th mechanized corps No. 0033. 18
June 1941

"1. Upon receipt of this order, bring into combat

readiness of all parts.

2. Put the units on alert in accordance with the plans for raising the alert, but do not announce the alarm itself. To carry out all work quickly, but without noise, without panic and talkativeness, having the prescribed norms for portable and transportable supplies of food, fuels and lubricants, ammunition and other types of military-technical support. Take with you only what is necessary for life and battle.

3. Replenish each unit with personnel. Recall immediately personnel from business trips and remove those who are on various jobs. At the points of the old deployment, leave the minimum number of people for protection and mobilization cells, commanders and political workers.

led by responsible

4. At 23.00 on 18.6.41, the units set out from the occupied winter quarters and concentrate ... (Then he signs which division goes where. - E.P.). 5. Marches only at

night. In areas of concentration, carefully disguise and organize all-round security and observation. Dig cracks, disperse the troops to a company with a company removed from the company 300-400 m ... "

And now pay attention to the timing - the body is literally rushed from the military camps.

"8. By 23.00 18.6.41, report to the headquarters of the corps (Jelgava) by telephone or telegraph with the conditional figure "127" about the speed of winter apartments ...

10. Command post of the 12th mechanized corps from 4.00 20.6.41 - in the forest 2 km west of the city of DV. Nice (1266). Until 22.00 on 18.6.41, the command post of the corps-

is Jelgava "[22]. The next day, June 19, another order was issued in Pribovo, where, among other things, it says:

"... In the foreground, finish the work. But the positions of the foreground occupy only in case of violation of the state border by the enemy.

To ensure the rapid occupation of positions both in the foreground and (in) the main defensive zone, the corresponding units must be completely on alert ... "This is again about the

statements of Marshal Zhukov. And here is another point, already definitively indicating that everyone understood: in three days there will be a war. **"Minefields should be set up**

according to the plan of the army commander where they should be according to the plan of defensive construction. Pay attention to complete secrecy for the enemy and security for your units. To create blockages and other anti-tank and anti-personnel obstacles according to the plan of the army commander - also according to the plan of defensive construction.

That is, they not only put the troops on alert, but also laid mines! And further: **"... Our advancing**

units must go to their hiding areas. Take into account the more frequent cases of overflights of the state border by German aircraft.

Continue persistently replenishing units with fire supplies and other types of supplies.

... In the early 50s, the Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces conducted a survey of Soviet military leaders regarding the concentration and deployment of troops in the western border military districts in June 1941. In 1989, the Military Historical Journal began publishing its results. True, only the first two questions were answered:

“Was the plan for the defense of the state border brought to the attention of the troops in the part that concerns them; when and what was done by the command and headquarters to ensure the implementation of this plan?

“From what time and on the basis of what order did the covering troops begin to reach the state border, and how many of them were deployed before the start of hostilities?”

The answers were different, but pay attention to the dates!

“Colonel-General of the Tank Forces P.P. Poluboyarov (former head of the armored forces of the PribOVO): “On June 16, at

23:00, the command of the 12th mechanized corps received a directive to put the formation on alert. The corps commander, Major General N. M. Shestopalov, was informed of this at 11 p.m. on June 17 upon his arrival from the 202nd Motorized Division, where he was conducting a check of mobilization readiness. On June 18, the corps commander raised formations and units on combat alert and ordered them to be withdrawn to the planned areas. During June 19 and 20 this was done.

On June 16, by order of the district headquarters, the 3rd mechanized corps (commander Major General of the Tank Forces A.V. Kurkin) was also put on alert, which concentrated in the indicated area at the same time.

Lieutenant General P. P. Sobennikov (former commander of the 8th Army):

“The district commander decided to go to Taurage and put the 11th rifle corps on alert there, Major General M. S. Shumilov, and ordered me to leave for the right flank of the army. We sent the chief of staff of the army, Major General G. A. Larionov, back to Yelgava. He received the task of bringing the headquarters to the command post. By the end of the day, oral orders were given to concentrate

troops on the border. On the morning of June 19, I personally checked the progress of the order. Parts of the 10th, 90th and 125th rifle divisions occupied trenches and wood-and-earth firing points, although many of the structures were not yet completely ready. Parts of the 12th

On the night of June 19, the mechanized corps were withdrawn to the Siauliai area, at the same time the army headquarters arrived at the command post.

Major General I. I. Fadeev (former commander of the 10th Infantry Division of the 8th

Army): "On June 19, 1941, an order was received from the commander of the 10th Infantry Corps, Major General I. F. Nikolaev to bring the division into combat readiness. All units were immediately withdrawn to the defense area, occupied bunkers and artillery firing positions. With dawn, the commanders of regiments, battalions and companies on the ground specified combat missions in accordance with the previously developed plan and brought them to the

commanders of platoons and squads. In order to conceal the activities carried out on the border, ordinary defense work was carried out, and part of the personnel was disguised inside the defensive structures, being in full combat readiness ... "

Army General M. A. Purkaev (former chief of staff of the KOVO):

"On June 13 or 14, I made a proposal to withdraw rifle divisions to the border of the Vladimir-Volyn fortified area, which does not have weapons in the defensive structures. The military council of the district accepted these considerations and gave appropriate instructions to the commander of the 5th

Army. However, the next morning, Colonel General MP Kirponos, in the presence of a member of the military council, accused me of wanting to provoke a war. Immediately from the office, I called the Chief of the General Staff and reported the decision. G.K. Zhukov ordered the troops to be withdrawn to the line of the UR, observing camouflage measures.

Major General P. I. Abramidze (former commander of the 72nd Mining rifle division of the 26th army):

"On June 20, 1941, I received the following code from the General Staff: "All units and units of your formation located on the very border should be taken back a few kilometers, that is, to the line of prepared positions. Do not respond to any provocations from the German units until they violate the state border. All parts of the division must

be put on alert. Execution must be delivered by 24:00 June 21, 1941. And here, for

a snack, is an excerpt from the memoirs of the former military commissar of the 19th mechanized corps, Ivan Kalyadin:

“On the morning of June 19, the corps commander unexpectedly invited me to his place. The chief of staff, Colonel K. D. Devyatov, the head of the operations department, Major A. I. Kazakov, and the chiefs of military branches and services gathered in his office. There was also a colonel unknown to me from the headquarters of the district. As soon as

I entered, General Feklenko, turning to him, said: - Please, Comrade Colonel, speak. The representative of the district headquarters informed the audience about the ground and air reconnaissance carried out by the enemy on the border with the USSR, which has intensified in recent days, and that the Nazi leadership does not respond to the

corresponding representations of our government. “In the coming days, an attack by Nazi Germany on our country is possible,” the colonel said bluntly. - In this regard, the Military Council of the KOVO made a number of important decisions. In particular, during tonight the operational department of the district will be moved to a field command post near the city of Ternopil. On the night of June 20, the command of the 19th mechanized corps is invited to withdraw all tanks and artillery, vehicles and communications centers, as well as armored vehicles of mechanized units from the parks to safe places in order to take precautions and protect tank divisions from surprise air strikes on the night of June 20 in accordance with the approved deployment plan for option number 1. Air c

The colonel left, and we remained in the office, waiting for the commander's orders. For a while he was silent. Then he stood up, looked around at those present

and said: - No matter how much you feed a wolf, he still looks into the forest ... The old proverb is true, it turns out, to this day. What we have heard today, comrades, should not discourage us. Nothing unexpected happened. We have been preparing for this for a long time ... The reason for the withdrawal of units and formations from the garrisons is not to be disclosed. To questions, no matter who asks the

anxiety. So to speak, training. Party and Soviet leaders of the regions learn about everything through their line.

The corps commander ordered the chief of staff, together with the chiefs of the military branches, as well as the propaganda department, to draw up (respectively) a plan for the withdrawal of formations and a plan of party political measures for this period within the next t

That is, what do we see? Starting from the second half of May, the troops are slowly being pulled up to the border. From about June 12 to June 16, they begin to advance, on the 18th, when it already becomes clear that the Germans are taking up initial positions for the offensive, our units also receive orders to take up positions according to the cover plan and be in full combat readiness.

And in this situation, the famous "Directive No. 1" (and in fact without a number) is no longer a desperate attempt to save the situation, but a natural result of that very "avalanche" of orders and directives. Cartridges have been issued, food has been received, vehicles have been refueled - now the personnel can sleep in anticipation of the

order. The order was received on the night of June 22.

"To the Military Councils of the LVO, PribOVO, ZAPOVO, KOVO, OdVO Copy: People's Commissar of the Navy

1) During June 22–23, 1941, a sudden attack by the Germans on the fronts of the LVO, PribOVO, ZAPOVO, KOVO, OdVO is possible, the German attack may begin with provocative actions.

2) The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that can cause major complications.

At the same time, the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa military districts should be on full alert to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies. 3) I order: a) During the night of June

22, 1941,

covertly occupy the firing points of fortified areas on the state border. b) Before dawn on June 22, 1941, disperse all aviation, including military aviation, over field airfields, carefully disguise.

c) Put all units on combat readiness. Troops to keep dispersed and disguised.

d) Put the air defense on alert without additional lifting of assigned personnel. Prepare all measures to darken cities and objects. e) No other activities are to be carried out without special instructions. Timoshenko, Zhukov. 21.6.41".

If we consider this document

in isolation, it is, of course, strange and vague. But we already know what has been done by then. We also know that **"alarm readiness terms ... for horse-drawn infantry and artillery units are 2 hours; for cavalry, motorized units and mechanized artillery - 3 hours.** That is, these directives only prescribe to do what has not yet been done: raise units on alert, take the firing points of the URs on the border (those that were visible to the Germans and which did not occupy until the last), disperse aviation (this was done at the last moment so that the Germans could not find out in advance the location of the field airfields - and if you're lucky, the Luftwaffe will also bomb the empty runways) and alert the air defense. The rest should be ready by then.

Only the phrase "do not succumb to provocations", which has already set the teeth on edge, confuses. It is rather vague, but probably by that time all the personnel, from privates to generals, had already drilled all the brains with explanations about this. And anyway, even in the last directive they mentioned it.

What kind of provocations are these, and why was our government so desperately afraid of them?

Chapter

5 "Do not succumb to provocations!"

... And again we will have to return to the mainstream of the international politicians.

So, by June 1941, the position of the players in the bloody chess of World War II was as follows. France is occupied and out of the game. The USSR and Germany are bound by a non-aggression pact. England and Germany are at war on the principle: "if an elephant attacks a whale, who will collect whom?" Both opponents do bad things to each other on sea routes, fight in the air and a little on land in Africa and Europe. The British do not have the opportunity to get out of their island mink and do something serious in the European expanses, Hitler does not have the desire to lay down soldiers while crossing the English Channel. (There was another factor, but more on that later.)

And then the British suffered a quite understandable nuisance in their circumstances - they ran out of money. Not for cakes - for weapons. The British bought a significant part of their weapons and equipment from the sponsor of all wars - the United States of America, and now there was nothing to pay for military supplies. As for the position of the United States, which seemed

to be on the sidelines, but peered into what was happening with keen interest, it was quite amusing. Firstly: yes, American capital supported Hitler on his way to power - but he did not support him against England! The Yankees invested in the British Fuhrer as a future terminator against the USSR - and what happened?

Secondly: of course, US presidents are the spokesmen for the interests of capital - but they are not necessarily the same groups, and not

necessarily all US financial groups have the same political interests. When Hitler came to power, Hoover was president, and then he was replaced by Roosevelt, who had

slightly different political views.

And there is also a third. The President of the United States was forced to maneuver between three groups: Nazism fans, of which there were plenty in the United States, supporters of participation in that

or otherwise in the European conflict and by the strongest group of "isolationists" who declared that the war was far away and there was nothing to interfere.

So the question is: Will the United States support the Soviet Union in a future war, or will they prefer to remain on the sidelines? And we really needed the Americans, primarily as a "sponsor of all wars." So the British ran out of money just in time. In December 1940, Roosevelt began pushing the Lend-

Lease Act through Congress. This law gave the president the right to lend or lease to the government of any country whose defense is recognized as vital to the security of the United States, military equipment, weapons, ammunition, equipment, strategic raw materials, food, etc. Security is a good thing, but it is not enough for the broad masses understandable when the war goes overseas. Try to explain how some kind of bombing of some London is connected with it. London - where is it? Therefore, in the course of the PR campaign of the new law, they constantly talked about lofty matters - that lend-lease is intended

for countries that are victims of aggression. Initially, the law was adopted, as already mentioned, to help England, which ran out of money to pay for military supplies. However, by that time Hitler's intentions to go to war against the USSR were already so obvious that the question naturally arose: is it possible to extend the law to the Soviet Union if it also becomes a victim of German aggression?

We must not forget that we became allies only after June 22. Before that, in the eyes of the American layman, Hitler and Stalin were phenomena of the same order. Their states were considered equally "evil empires" - especially since they were bound by a non-aggression pact, that is, in the eyes of the world community they were almost allies. Hitler was at war with the United States-friendly England, so he turned out to be a little more "bad", but that's all.

The discussion of this issue in Congress resulted in an amendment excluding the Soviet Union from among the states that have the right to claim lend-lease. The amendment, however, was rejected - but by a very small majority: 66% of the deputies of the House of Representatives and 61% of senators voted against it. Law on

Lend-Lease was accepted on March 11, 1941. But the law is the law - and it's up to the president

to decide! The official position of the United States in relation to international conflicts of the 1941 model was defined by Deputy Secretary of State S. Welles as follows: **"The policy of the United States is to provide all practical assistance to Great Britain, the British dominions and other countries that suffer from aggression."** Accordingly, in order to claim Lend-Lease and,

in general, the United States as an ally, it was absolutely necessary for us to obtain the status of a victim of aggression. And such that no one under it couldn't dig.

In May 1941, a new threat loomed over the coveted status. It was the second factor that averted Hitler from crossing the English Channel: from the very beginning of his political career, the Führer was a noted and convinced Anglophile, since the time of Mein Kampf he did not stop declaring his love for England and for her was ready for a lot.

"The German sword should have conquered the land for the German plow and thus provided the daily bread of the German nation. For such a policy we could find only one ally in Europe: England. Only in alliance with England, covering our rear, we could start a new great German campaign ... " Trying to convince

supporters to share this love, Hitler cites a variety of arguments. Those were the "Eastern", and here you have the "Western".

"The British military policy had terrible consequences for Germany. But this should not prevent us now from understanding that England is no longer interested in the destruction of Germany. On the contrary, now every year British policy will feel more and more uncomfortable from the fact that French hegemony in Europe is becoming stronger ... In the question of possible allies, our state should, of course, not be guided by the memories of the past, but should be able to use the experience of the past in the interests of the future . Experience teaches, first of all, that such unions, which set themselves only negative goals,

doomed to weakness. The destinies of two peoples will become inseparable only if the union of these peoples opens up to both of them the prospect of new acquisitions, new conquests, in a word, the strengthening of both sides.

But what is that!? Remember Hitler's lamentations that Germany, they say, should have done the same thing as Japan at the beginning of the century - that is, to fight with Russia. And here is how, in his opinion, the English policy of Germany should have been built:

"... No sacrifice should have seemed too great to us in order to win the favor of England. We had to abandon the colonies and the position of sea power and thereby save the English industry from the need to compete with us ... " How do you like the level of the deflection? And further:

"We had to completely

abandon the colonies and participation in maritime trade, completely abandon the creation of the German navy. We had to completely concentrate all the forces of the state on the creation of an exclusively land army. As a result, we would have some self-restraint for this moment, but we would secure a great future for ourselves. Looking ahead in time, let's say that, unlike the political sphere, Hitler achieved a lot in the way of propaganda. So, for example, the conspiring generals, the

same ones who almost blew up the Fuhrer in 1944, had close ties to British intelligence. And not only them. Rudolf Ressler, the most effective agent of the Second World War, formally working for British intelligence, under this sauce, obtained for us **any** information about the German army. By order. Can you imagine how many generals had to give him information? Do you think Stalin had reason to trust the Anglo-German enmity? In the spring of 1941, Hitler made another attempt to force the British to make peace with him. In April-May, he delivered a series of sensitive blows against British troops located in the zone of British interests in

Europe and Africa. At the beginning of May, something completely crazy happened.

On May 10, 1941, Hitler's closest associate, Rudolf Hess, flew to England on a military plane and jumped out with a parachute. Hitler declared that he had gone mad. Of course, they believed him - how could one not believe Hitler! (Moreover, the materials related to the "Hess mission" are still classified in England.) On May 22,

1941, Soviet political intelligence reported to **Stalin : friend Tom Dupree**

(Deputy Chief of Press at the Foreign Office) ... During the conversations of British military intelligence officers with Hess, Hess claimed

... that he had come to England to conclude a compromise peace, which should stop the increasing exhaustion of both warring countries and prevent the final destruction of the British Empire, stabilizing forces . According to Hess, he continues to remain loyal to Hitler... ..In a conversation with Kirk Patrick, Hess stated *How*
that the war between

the two northern peoples is a crime. Hess believes that there is a strong

anti-Churchill party in England which stands for peace and that with his (Hess's) arrival will receive a powerful stimulus in the struggle for peace. Tom Dupree, when asked by "Senchen" whether he thinks that an Anglo-German alliance against the USSR would be acceptable for

Hess, replied that this is exactly what Hess wants to achieve ...

... In Parliament, Churchill was asked a question - at the disposal what (military or civil) authorities is Hess.

Churchill replied: "Hess is my prisoner," thereby warning the opposition from intrigues with Hess.

"Senchen" believes that now the time for peace negotiations has not yet come, but in the process of further development of the war, Hess may become the center of intrigues for concluding a compromise peace and will be useful for the peace party in England and for Hitl

But it is interesting: what did Churchill negotiate with Hess, if these negotiations are still secret?

In the same May, Soviet-American relations suddenly deteriorated. Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Lozovsky reported to Stalin on June 13:

“The American government has recently carried out a number of hostile measures against the Soviet Union. In addition to the almost complete termination of licenses for the export of equipment, the American government banned Soviet engineers from visiting factories, carried out discriminatory measures, restricting the freedom of movement of Soviet diplomats, confiscated iridium belonging to us, demanded the departure of military attaché assistants Berezin and Ovchinnikov, organized a trial of Bookkniga employees for in order to prove the involvement of the Soviet Union in propaganda in the United States, etc. Now the entire American press is waging a furious campaign against the USSR, proving in every way that the strike war that has swept through the United States was caused by “Moscow agents”...”[25] If the economic —

measures were still somehow explained by the application of President Roosevelt's export control proclamation to the USSR, then the rest of the measures could be regarded in one and only way: as preparing American public opinion for the fact that the United States would not enter the war on the side of the USSR.

And now let's imagine two unfulfilled, but quite possible events. First, Hess manages to reach an agreement with London. Britain, which has neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, but only permanent interests, makes peace with Germany. Secondly, the war begins in such a way that Hitler has reason to present himself as a victim of aggression. Meanwhile, powerful military production has already been deployed in the United States. Who, then, will receive Lend-Lease assistance, as well as Britain and the United States as allies?

We must not forget also about Japan, connected with Germany by the tripartite pact. True, the Japanese, who were not at all eager to fight the USSR, had a loophole: they were obliged to unconditionally support an ally only if he was attacked. And if the Soviet government leaves Hitler a loophole

for a provocation, allowing him to present Germany as a victim of aggression, then we automatically get a war also on the eastern borders. So it was

very important for the German Fuhrer not to allow the USSR to receive the status of a state suffering from aggression - in order to give the United States, where the demonstrative anti-Soviet campaign began, a reason not to enter the war on our side, and Japan, on the contrary, to force it to join. For us, accordingly, it was vitally important not to let him reason to do it. At

the end of May, the Goebbels Propaganda Ministry began a big game, launching all sorts of rumors about the upcoming German attack on England, perhaps even in alliance with the USSR. The scheme of provocation turned out to be extremely simple: Germany was building up forces on the border, while at the same time creating the impression that an attack on England was actually being prepared. Naturally, the USSR is also building up strength. Then something happens that can be represented as "aggression" on our part, and Germany strikes back. Like, we were going to fight with Britain, and these Russians attacked us themselves. In the extreme case, if the Soviet Union could not be provoked, the Germans could also stage an attack, just as they did in Poland. Well, did Stalin have

reason to chill the snow, but not to give Hitler the opportunity to present us as the initiators of the clash? True, he did not reach the French version with the withdrawal of cartridges, but in everything else they insured and reinsured themselves.

One of the measures was an ostentatious, deliberate disregard for the threat of war, staged in such a way as to be sure to catch the eye of both foreign diplomats and foreign spies. The USSR demonstrated "misunderstanding" of the situation at all levels, official and unofficial. On June 9, the Japanese ambassador in Moscow telegraphed to his colleague in Sofia: ***"The intensely***

circulating rumors that Germany will attack the Soviet Union, and in particular the information coming from Germany, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, make us think that the moment of this speech has approached ...

The situation in Moscow is very calm, and signs of preparation for war are also imperceptible, namely: air defense measures, a reduction in the number of taxis, etc. On May 24, I asked Molotov about this. He replied that at present there were no frictions between Germany and the Soviet Union that could lead to war, but if a conflict arose, he considered it his duty to resolve it peacefully. In addition, the day before yesterday, on the 7th, the German ambassador, in a conversation with me, said that there were no reports from the government on this issue, that there were no signs of preparations for war on the part of the Soviet Union, which must be aware of the existing delicate situation, and besides, the Soviet Union carefully fulfills the promises made to Germany, so it is difficult to find reasons for attacking the Soviet Union. On June 10, Hitler set the start of the campaign for June 22. On the same day, the chief of

the general staff of the ground forces, General Halder, issued an appropriate order, which was transferred to the troops. The British radio interception center in Bletchley picked up one of these messages, decoded and sent "up". Naturally, this information also got into British intelligence, and there, at the very top, sat comrades from the "Cambridge Five" - the NKVD residency. Not later than June 12, the information should have been in Moscow.

Stalin, of course, answered - and how! On June 13, at 18 o'clock, the very famous TASS report was broadcast on Moscow radio and on the same day through diplomatic channels handed over to the ministers of foreign affairs of the states concerned. The next day it was published in the central Soviet

newspapers.

“Even before the arrival of the British Ambassador, Mr. Cripps, in London, and especially after his arrival, rumors began to be circulated in the English and foreign press in general about the “imminence of war between the USSR and Germany.” According to these rumors: 1) Germany allegedly made claims to the USSR of a territorial and economic nature, and now negotiations are underway between Germany and the USSR on the conclusion of a new, closer

agreement between them; 2) The USSR allegedly rejected these claims, in connection with which Germany began to concentrate its troops near the b

attacks on the

USSR; 3) The Soviet Union, in turn, began to intensively prepare for war with Germany and is concentrating troops near the borders

of the latter. Despite the obvious senselessness of these rumors, responsible circles in Moscow nevertheless considered it necessary, in view of the stubborn exaggeration of these rumors, to authorize TASS to declare that these rumors are clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the USSR and Germany, interested in

further expanding the war. TASS declares that: 1) Germany did not present any claims to the USSR and does not offer any new, closer agreement, which is why negotiations on this subject could not take place; 2) according to the USSR, Germany also steadfastly complies with the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, like the Soviet Union, which is why, according to Soviet circles, rumors about Germany's intentions to break the pact and launch an attack on the USSR are devoid of any ground, and what is happening in the last the timing of the transfer of German troops, liberated in the Balkans, to the eastern and northeastern regions of Germany is connected, presumably, with other motives that have nothing to do with Soviet-German relations; 3) the USSR, as follows from its peace policy, observed and intends to comply with the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, which is why the rumors that the USSR is preparing for war with Germany are false and provocative; 4) The purpose of the Red Army's current summer training camps and the upcoming maneuvers is nothing more than training the reserves and checking the operation of the railway apparatus, which, as you know, are carried out every year, which is why it is at least absurd to portray the

Not only did the Soviet Union demonstrate the absence of reasons for war. The message was also a trap for Hitler. He had three response options, one worse than the other: a) make claims to the USSR - thus signing the preparation for the war; b) respond with a similar statement - then, in the event of an attack, the Fuhrer presented himself not only as an aggressor, but also as a cynical and perfidious aggressor; c) keep silent, implicitly expressing

disagreement with Stalin and recognizing that the "cooling" in relations exists and comes from Germany.

It was an absolutely brilliant political move. Now, no matter how the Fuhrer behaved, in the event of a war, he would in any case come out as an aggressor. He had only one hope - that something would still happen on the border that could be regarded as a provocation.

By the way, this TASS report, in the context of Goebbels' disinformation campaign, proved best of all: Stalin did not believe for a moment that Hitler was going to attack England. Because when rumors are circulating around the world about a secret alliance between the USSR and Germany, such a statement can be made only in one case: if the Soviet government knows for sure that in a few days the rumors will be refuted by the very course of events. Did

the TASS message disorientate the Soviet military and prevent them from preparing for war? This is remarkably stated in military memoirs. For example, Marshal Rotmistrov, who in May 1941 was appointed chief of staff of the 3rd mechanized corps (PribOVO). ***"The corps was commanded***

by Major General of the Tank Forces A. V. Kurkin, a man of strong character and rare efficiency ... Both of us were absolutely convinced that the time was not far off when, intoxicated with easy victories on the European continent, the Nazi army would rush to the Soviet Union. And even the well-known TASS Statement of June 14, 1941 on the groundlessness of rumors concerning the preparation by the Germans of war against the USSR did not shake our conviction. Why, then, we reasoned, are the Nazis transferring large military forces to East Prussia, and why are their planes frankly conducting aerial reconnaissance of Soviet territory?

... On June 21, just a few hours before the invasion of the Nazi troops into Lithuania, the commander of the troops of the Baltic Special Military District, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov, arrived in Kaunas. Hurriedly entering the office of General Kurkin, with whom I was at that time on a report, he nodded in response to our greeting and, without any preface, reported how he struck:

- There is evidence that in the next day or two it is possible sudden German attack.

We looked at each other silently. And although in recent days we have been haunted by a premonition of this disaster, Kuznetsov's message was stunned. — And what about the TASS Statement? Kurkin asked in

astonishment. - After all, it said ... - But this is a foreign policy action that had no direct relation to the army, - said the commander. He sank wearily into a chair, wiping his sweaty, haggard face with a handkerchief. "There is no need to discuss these issues now. We have our rather important..."[26]

Like this - and not babble with girlish naivety: "But Comrade Stalin said ..." Comrade Stalin said, and those who need it understood him correctly.

Berlin did not comment on the TASS report in any way, which proved that the war would begin in the coming days. Now the main thing was to avoid too abrupt movements, and then Hitler would have no choice but to attack the USSR without any reason and without declaring war. Or maybe, in such a situation, he, having weighed all the circumstances, will not dare to attack, leaving England formally at war with him in the rear? It was a very tiny, but still a chance. In the end, he postponed the attack on France, eventually launching the invasion six months later than originally planned. What were the dangerous moments that, according to the concepts of that time, could be equated with the intention to start a war?

Naturally, mobilization. Then, the occupation by the troops of the firing structures of the fortified areas, visible from the German territory. Like, how is it: you yourself make such statements, and you yourself are sitting in pillboxes. Shelling of German territory - especially with cannons and machine guns. And, finally, the violation of the ground border by troops. They camouflaged themselves from the enemy. Masked and from the allies. Here, for example, is what Georgy Dimitrov, General Secretary of

the Executive Committee of the Comintern, wrote in his diary on June 21, 1941.

"In a telegram from Chou En-lai from Chongqing to Yanan (Mao Tse-tung), it is mentioned, among other things, that Chiang Kai-shek stubbornly declares,

that Germany will attack the USSR, and even plans a date - 06/21/41! ... Rumors of an upcoming attack are multiplying from all sides...

... I called Molotov in the morning. He asked to speak with Jos. Vissarionovich on the situation and the necessary instructions for the Communist

Parties. Mol.: "The situation is unclear. There is a big game going on. Not everything from U.S. I'll talk to I.V. If there's anything special, I'll call!"

That is, even in front of foreign communists, Stalin played the role of an unsuspecting, gullible simpleton. However, the game was really very big and it was worth it. The situation was extremely difficult, the arrows of the scales froze in an unstable balance at zero, and any breath of wind could move them. Everyone knows that it is not Stalin, but Molotov, Deputy Chairman of the

Council of People's Commissars, who will be the first to inform the Soviet people about the beginning of the war, and this is important! - People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Everyone has heard of this speech, but how many have read it? And there, by the way, it said the following:

"Today, at 4 o'clock in the morning, without presenting any claims against the Soviet Union, without declaring war, German troops attacked our country, attacked our borders in many places and bombed our cities from their aircraft ... Enemy aircraft raids and artillery shelling were also committed from Romanian and Finnish territory. This unheard-of attack on our country is treachery unparalleled

in the history of civilized peoples. The attack on our country was carried out despite the fact that a non-aggression pact was concluded between the USSR and Germany and the Soviet government fulfilled all the conditions of this pact in all good faith. The attack on our country was carried out despite the fact that during the entire period of the validity of this treaty the German government could never make a single claim against the USSR regarding the fulfillment of the treaty. The entire responsibility for this predatory attack on the Soviet Union falls entirely on the German fascist rulers.

Already after the attack, the German ambassador in Moscow, Schulenburg, at 5:30 in the morning made me, as a people's

Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, a statement on behalf of his government that the German government had decided start a war against the USSR in connection with the concentration of Red Army units near the eastern German border.

In response to this, on behalf of the Soviet government, I stated that until the last minute the German government did not make any claims against the Soviet government, that Germany attacked the USSR, despite the peace-loving position of the Soviet Union, and that thereby fascist Germany was the attacking side.

On behalf of the Government of the Soviet Union, I must also declare that at no point did our troops and our aviation allow violations of the border, and therefore the statement made by the Romanian radio this morning that allegedly Soviet aircraft fired at Romanian airfields is a complete lie and provocation. The whole declaration of Hitler today, who is trying to retroactively concoct accusatory material about non-compliance by the Soviet Union with the Soviet-German pact, is the same lie and provocation ... " Hitler, indeed, tried to present the USSR as an attacker

side, but it looked unconvincing and had no success ...

Chapter

6 The Riddle of the Directive

Let us return, however, to Directive No. 1. There are no special questions about its content. By the time of writing, too. It is known that it was handed over to the troops at 0:30 on June 22. Even taking into account the encryption - decryption - transmission, there was enough time to complete it. The term for raising parts on alarm, as we remember, is 2-3 hours. The Germans also did not immediately go on the attack. First, artillery preparation, bombing - there should not be much damage from them, since the units are kept "dispersed and camouflaged", in shelters, aviation - at field airfields, also camouflaged. Then the Germans need to cross the border (and there may also be a river, and a rather big one). Our lines of defense are mostly located a few kilometers from the border, they also need to be passed, the infantry goes no faster than 5 kilometers per hour, if on the road ... In general, there was enough time to prepare for defense.

So, there are no special questions about the content and time of sending. But in terms of time and circumstances of writing - there are, and a lot. Here is how, according to the memoirs of Marshal Zhukov, this document was born:

“On the evening of June 21, the chief of staff of the Kiev military district, Lieutenant General M.A. Purkaev, called me and reported that a defector, a German sergeant major, had come to the border guards, claiming that German troops were leaving for the initial areas for an offensive that would begin on the morning of June 22.

I immediately reported to the People's Commissar and I. V. Stalin what M. A. Purkaev had

conveyed. “Come with the people’s commissar in 45 minutes to the Kremlin,” he said. I. V. Stalin.

Having taken with us a draft directive to the troops, together with the People's Commissar and Lieutenant General N. F. Vatutin, we went to the Kremlin. On the way, we agreed at all costs to achieve a decision to put the troops on combat readiness.

We have already talked about combat readiness. Another thing is strange: the military usually write memoirs quite clearly. And it's time, especially when it comes to such a day, they indicate. "Evening" - when? At 5 pm, at 7 pm, at 9 pm? You can, of course, look at the visitor log, and we will certainly look, but such vagueness in itself is alarming.

"AND. V. Stalin met us alone. He was clearly concerned.

"But didn't the German generals plant this defector in order to provoke a conflict?" - he asked. - No, - answered

S. K. Timoshenko. "We think the defector is telling the truth."

Everything is interesting here.

The defector came to the border guards. Those, of course, reported him to the district (there was no time to be considered ambitions), but they also reported to the authorities. Given the history of the URs, Beria ran to the leader faster than the generals reached, so Stalin should have known everything for a long time. And about the defector, and about whether he is a provocateur. Nevertheless, he asks Timoshenko about this, and Comrade Timoshenko, not seeing the defector in the eyes, not being a Chekist, nevertheless, is firmly convinced of his

honesty.

The next Stalinist question directly suggests itself: "Why do you think so, Comrade Timoshenko?" This is where we should start talking about intelligence data: that the border strip is full of German troops, the noise of engines is heard from the other side, intelligence reports this and that ... Nothing like that! Comrade Stalin, who sometimes even read the sources of intelligence reports, is not at all concerned about the quality of such fateful information. But what about "not succumbing to provocations?" ***"In the meantime,***

members of the Politburo entered the office of I.V. Stalin. Stalin briefly briefed them. - What do we do?

- asked I. V. Stalin. There was no answer. (?! -

E.P.) (Oh, yes! We forgot! They

but everyone is intimidated by the mustachioed villain to complete dumbness! - ***E. P.)***

"We must immediately give a directive to the troops on bringing all the troops of the border districts to full combat readiness," said the people's

commissar. — Read! - said I. V. Stalin.

I have read the draft directive."

Interesting, by the way - what kind of project is this? Marshall does not bring him. Moreover, there are no traces of the original text either in the archives or in the literature.

"AND. V. Stalin remarked:

"It is premature to give such a directive now, perhaps the issue will still be settled peacefully. It is necessary to give a short directive in which it is indicated that the attack can begin with provocative actions of the German units. The troops of the border districts should not succumb to any provocations, so as not to cause complications. Wasting no time, N. F. Vatutin and I went

to another room and quickly drafted a directive from the people's commissar.

Returning to the office, they asked permission to report. I.

V. Stalin, having listened to the draft directive and himself once again after reading it, he made some corrections and handed it over to the people's commissar for signature ...

With this directive, N.F. Vatutin immediately went to the General Staff in order to immediately transfer it to the districts. The transfer to the districts was completed at 00.30 on June 22, 1941. A copy of the directive was handed over to the People's Commissar of the Navy.

And now let's turn to the journal of visitors to Stalin's office for June 21. Indeed, People's Commissar of Defense Timoshenko entered there at 19.05, but ... without Zhukov. At the same time, Stalin could not "meet him alone", because by that time Molotov had been sitting with him for almost forty minutes. Together with Tymoshenko (and not after him), six more people came. These are Beria, Voroshilov, Malenkov, the head of the State Planning Commission, Voznesensky, the head of the mobilization and planning department of the defense committee under the Council of People's Commissars, and some Kuznetsov. (The journal contains only surnames, without initials and positions. Historians can choose from three Kuznetsovs, I found a fourth - however, the presence of a fifth is also not excluded). Of these, a member of the Politburo - only one (Voroshilov) and two candidates (Beria and

Malenkov). Then Timoshenko left Stalin at 20.15 and returned half an hour later with Zhukov. Evening? Evening! But they could not have any private conversation again, because Beria, Molotov, Voroshilov and Malenkov were still with Stalin, and together with

our heroes came Budyonny and Mekhlis. All the military and Malenkov left Stalin's office at 22.20.

Nothing seems strange to you? Where is Vatutin? But

Vatutin was not there at all! As you

can see, there were no private conversations, but there was a meeting, extremely representative, with the participation of the entire leading "five" (it is easy to figure it out - in a few days the "five" will be transformed into the State Defense Committee, whose composition we know by name). As for the "silent members of the Politburo" - also misunderstandings. Can you imagine a silent Mehli? Yes, and Budyonny too - Voroshilov in his Civil Army was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army, and Stalin was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front. Who should the cavalry marshal be afraid of? Again, during

this meeting, Zhukov and Timoshenko go to the reception room to write a directive, leaving the others to confer on military issues without the people's commissar and the head of the General Staff. What did they tell them all over again? Or were the others patiently waiting for them? In a

word, some nonsense turns out ...

Admiral Kuznetsov, People's Commissar of the Navy, who left as many as two variants of memories about this, became an accidental witness to the drafting of the directive. According to the canonical version, it went like this:

“... At about 11 pm the phone rang. I heard the voice of Marshal S. K. Timoshenko:

- There is very important information. Come to me.

He quickly put the latest data on the situation in the fleets into a folder and, calling Alafuzov [27], went with him. Vladimir Antonovich took the cards with him. We expected to report the situation on the seas. I saw that Alafuzov was looking at his white tunic, he must have considered it inconvenient to go to the People's Commissar of Defense in this form. “We should put on

newer ones,” he joked. But there was no time to change. Our people's commissariats were located

in the neighborhood ... A few minutes later we were already going up to the second floor of a small mansion, where S. K. Timoshenko's office was temporarily located.

Marshal, walking around the room, dictated ... Army General G.K. Zhukov was sitting at the table and writing something. In front of him lay several completed sheets of a large radiogram pad. It can be seen that the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff worked for quite a long time.

Semyon Konstantinovich noticed us and stopped. Briefly, without naming sources, he said that a German attack on our country was considered possible.

Zhukov got up and showed us the telegram he had prepared for the border districts. I remember it was lengthy - on three sheets. It set out in detail what the troops should do in the event of an attack by Nazi Germany. This telegram did not concern

the fleets directly. After running through the text of the telegram, I asked:

- Is it allowed to use weapons in case of an attack? -

Allowed. I

turn to Rear Admiral Alafuzov: "Run to headquarters and immediately instruct the fleets about full actual readiness, that is, readiness number one. Run! There was no time to discuss whether it was convenient for the admiral to run along the street. Vladimir Antonovich ran, I myself lingered for another minute, clarified whether I understood correctly that attacks could be expected that night. Yes, that's right, on the night of June 22. And she has already

That is, when Kuznetsov arrived, Timoshenko dictated, and Zhukov wrote down the text of the directive in a notepad for radiograms. But when was this text written?

In another version of his memoirs, published in the book "Defense of Leningrad", the admiral recalls this moment in a slightly different way. The fact is that this book was published in 1968, and put into typesetting already in 1965. The memoirs of Marshal Zhukov had not yet been published, and he had not read his report at the plenum in 1956, so the official position on the question of who proposed to put the troops on alert was not known. Here is what the admiral recalls: "When they entered the office, the people's

commissar in an unbuttoned tunic walked around the office and dictated something. The Chief of the General Staff G.K. Zhukov was sitting at the table and, without looking up, continued to write

telegram. Several sheets of a large notebook lay to his left: it means that it had been a long time since they had returned from the Kremlin (we knew that at 18 o'clock both of them were called [there](#)[28]) and were preparing district instructions.

"An attack by the Nazi troops is possible," S. K. Timoshenko began the conversation. According to him, the order to bring the troops to a state of combat readiness to repel the expected enemy attack was received by him personally from I.V. Stalin, who by that time already apparently had the relevant reliable information. At the same time, S. K. Timoshenko showed us a telegram just written by G. K. Zhukov. V. A. Alafuzov and I read it. It was addressed to the districts, and only one conclusion could be drawn from it - as soon as possible, without wasting even a minute, give the order to transfer the fleets to operational readiness number 1 ... "[29] That's it! It turns out that it was not the military who —

persuaded Stalin to put the troops on alert, but they themselves received the appropriate order from him. It was not Zhukov who told the leader about the defector, but Stalin already had information about the impending attack.

Now everything is falling into place. Of course, this incredibly important directive - in order to put the troops on alert, and not give Hitler a reason to shout about "Soviet aggression", and meet the enemy at our borders, and at the same time, if an opportunity arises, "play back" the war - would not be trusted to compile the people's commissar and the chief of the General Staff. Nine out of ten that she was born at this very meeting, being the fruit of collective creativity, and now Timoshenko dictated, and Zhukov copied it into a cipher pad. And it coincides in time - at 22.20 they left Stalin, while they were getting to the people's commissariat with all the stairs, corridors and security posts, just "about eleven" Timoshenko had to reach his office and call Kuznetsov, who was not present at the meeting. There is evidence that the directive reached the encryption department at 23.45, thirty or forty minutes for encryption, then to the signalmen, and at about 0.30, as Zhukov wrote, she left for the troops.

Something else is more interesting here. Let's go back to the neighboring people's commissariat, to the sailors. The first telegram given by the deputy people's commissar, who came running, left at 23.50 and consisted of one [phrase](#)[30]:

"Immediately switch to operational readiness number one"[31] . Actually, the directive

was written slowly, and it went to the fleets, despite the fact that it was much shorter than the army one, much later than its neighbors - at 1.12.

"Within 22.6. - 23.6. possible surprise attack by the Germans. The German attack may start with provocative actions. Our task is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. At the same time, the fleets and flotillas should be in full combat readiness to meet a possible attack by the Germans or their allies. I order, having switched to operational readiness No. 1, carefully mask the increase in combat readiness. I categorically forbid reconnaissance in foreign territorial waters. No other events are to be held without special instructions . "[32]

That is, what did Kuznetsov do? He sent a deputy to the people's commissariat, and he gave the fleets a prearranged signal to put them on alert. And then, after waiting for the military to send their directive, I listened to all the news from them and even then, slowly, wrote more detailed orders. What did they do in the fleets, having received such directives? What would you do? Right! Calls went

from the fleets to the people's commissariat. The first and main question was: "Can you shoot to kill?" "Can!" - happily answered the commissar. And in the people's commissariat of defense that - there was no telephone? How do you even know that "Directive No. 1" was actually the

first? Who can argue that, after returning from the meeting, Timoshenko and Zhukov did not first send to the districts something like "Put into action the plan for covering the state border" or did not instruct the same Vatutin to contact the HF commanders and warn them?

By the way, according to Pavlov's testimony during the investigation, Tymoshenko called the counties that night. But how!

"At one in the morning on June 22, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, I was summoned to the front headquarters. A member of the Military Council, Corps Commissar Fominykh, and Chief of Staff of the Front, Major General Klimovskikh, came with me. First question on the phone

The people's commissar asked: "Well, how are you, calmly?" I replied that a very large movement of German troops was observed on the right flank, according to the report of the commander of the 3rd Army Kuznetsov, for a day and a half, German motorized mechanized columns were continuously moving into the Suwalki salient. According to his own report, in the Augustow-Sopotskin section, the Germans removed the barbed wire

in many places ... "Lovely! Pavlov has such reports, but he goes to the theater in the evening for an operetta and then does not show his eyes to the headquarters. However,

Timoshenko is no better either ... ***"The people's commissar replied to my report: "Be calm and don't panic, gather the headquarters just in case this morning, maybe something unpleasant will happen, but look, there's no provocation go. If there are separate provocations, call." This ended the conversation."***

Good addict? "Assemble headquarters in the morning!" Unless, of course, the suspect Pavlov, a victim of Stalinism, is not lying. And he lied all the way, trying to shift the blame from himself to others, he lied and confused, thinking that the burdock security officer did not

understand anything about military affairs. However, we have one more memoir, which does not cause much doubt. These are the memoirs of Marshal Zakharov, who at that time was the chief of staff of the Odessa military district. On the evening of June 21, he was at the headquarters of the field command post in Tiraspol and, of course, did not leave anywhere. A call also came to the Odessa district, but not at one in the morning, but much earlier.

"At about 10 p.m. on June 21, I was summoned by the BODO apparatus for negotiations from Odessa, the commander of the district troops. He asked if I could decipher the telegram if I received it from Moscow. The commander was given the answer that I could decipher any encryption from Moscow. Another question followed: "I ask for the second time, confirm your answer, can you decipher the encryption from Moscow?" I was extremely surprised by the repetition of the request. I answered: "I report for the second time that I can decrypt any encryption from Moscow." An instruction followed: "Expect the arrival of a code of particular importance from Moscow. The Military Council authorizes you to immediately decipher the encryption and give the appropriate orders ... "

At 22:00, both Zhukov and Timoshenko were still in Stalin's office. But after all, someone informed the commander of the Odessa district that a very important directive had to be awaited. This means that either the people's commissar or the head of the General Staff called one of their deputies, briefed them on the matter and ordered them to call the districts. Perhaps this is exactly what the aforementioned but not present Vatutin was doing. Zakharov's

reaction is curious: ***"After receiving such an order, I immediately instructed the head of the encryption department to select an experienced cryptographer who could quickly and accurately decrypt the telegram as soon as a call from Moscow to the BODO apparatus followed and transmission began. Having gone down to the communication center, I called the operational duty officer of the General Staff to the BODO apparatus and asked him when we could expect the transmission of a code of particular importance. The attendant replied that he did not know yet. Having assessed the situation, at about 11 p.m. on June 21, I decided to call the commanders of the 14th, 35th and 48th rifle corps and the chief of staff of the 2nd cavalry corps, whose commander General P. A. Belov was at that time in the next vacation and rested in the district sanatorium in Odessa ... All of them were given the following instructions: 1. Raise headquarters and troops on alert and withdraw from settlements. 2. Parts of the cover to occupy their areas. 3. Esta***

Please note: the chief of staff of the Odessa district begins to act two hours before receiving the directive. He, in fact, did not need an order - the order of actions was dictated to him by previous events and a plan to cover the state border. Therefore, he took the strange double request from the district headquarters (obviously following the double request from Moscow) as a signal to action. ***"Having returned to the headquarters,***

where by that time the heads of departments and branches of the military, as well as the commander of the district air force, had been gathered, I informed them that a telegram of special importance was expected from Moscow and that I had given the appropriate orders to the corps commanders. The commander of the 2nd mechanized corps, Major General Yu. V. Novoselsky, whose headquarters was located in Tiraspol, was also present. The latter was

orders were given to put the divisions of the corps on alert and withdraw them to the designated waiting areas. Thus, seven rifle, two cavalry, two armored and motorized divisions and two fortified areas were raised directly in the border zone of the OdVO on combat alert ... The district air force commander

was asked to disperse aviation to operational airfields by dawn. The latter expressed objections, motivating them by the fact that many aircraft would be damaged during landing at operational airfields. Only after giving him a written order did the Air Force commander begin to execute it. And only then did the directive arrive in time: **"At about two**

o'clock in the morning on June

22, the duty officer at the communications center of the headquarters reported that the operational duty officer of the General Staff was calling me to the BODO apparatus. The following conversation took place: "A responsible duty officer of the General Staff is at the apparatus, accept a telegram of special importance and immediately report it to the Military Council." I answered:

"General Zakharov is at the apparatus. Understood the warning. Please pass c

... Having received the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense, I was very excited, since the order given to withdraw the district troops to the cover areas on the state border was in conflict with the instructions received from Moscow. I made a decision - to transfer on behalf of the commander of the district troops the content of the order of the people's commissar of defense to the corps commanders for steady execution and leadership, which was immediately done. However, the previous order, not only to put the troops of the district on combat readiness, but also to withdraw them to the waiting areas, was also not canceled.

Moreover, a combat alert was announced

in all the garrisons of the district. Of course, not all districts had such enterprising chiefs of staff. But you must admit that the above story is in a certain contradiction with Pavlov's testimony.

Pavlov is a very interesting character in general.

Chapter

7 "Victims of the Regime"

How many films and books began the story of the war with these dramatic shots! At four o'clock in the morning on June 22, the Germans unleash a fiery artillery storm on Soviet soldiers sleeping peacefully in the barracks, frightened Red Army soldiers in their underwear rush around the courtyard of the military unit, fall, struck down by shrapnel ...

Right now, now they will ask me: "Didn't this really happen?" "Was! I will answer. — Of course it was! In the 4th Army of the Western Special Military District, stationed in Brest, it was precisely So".

Well, you need to be able to pull one army over the entire border! Yes Long live Soviet art!

On the eve of the war, units of the 6th and 42nd rifle divisions were quartered directly in the Brest Fortress - about 7 thousand people. It was possible to leave the fortress not in the direction of the Germans only through one northern gate. In addition, not far from Brest, three kilometers from the border, there was the 22nd Panzer Division. It was located in a military town on a flat area, the families of the command staff lived right there. The hospital of the 4th army was located on the island across the border river Bug. The Germans hoisted balloons with spotters into the air and, as in practice firing, shot all three divisions. What did one have to think about in order to place troops

in such a way on the eve of the war? And who personally was the owner of this smart head? Researcher Igor Kuznetsov in the article "Why did the Brest Fortress become a trap for its defenders?" writes:

"... Divisions of light tanks (and the "Brest" 22nd tank division was armed only with T-26s) on the banks of the border river have absolutely nothing to do. First, the artillery must suppress the enemy's fire system, then the infantry must establish crossings and seize a bridgehead on the enemy coast - and only after that, a tank armada must burst into the gap from the depth of the operational formation. That's how he reported

to a high meeting in December 1940, the chief tankman of the Red Army, General Pavlov, which is why in the “red package” the concentration area for the 22nd TD was indicated by no means the eastern bank of the Bug, but Zhabinka, 25 km from—

Brest! ”[33] A familiar surname , however! Is this the same General Pavlov who, on the eve of the war, commanded the Western Special Military District? And the one who wrote directives to the 22nd Panzer Division for the development of "red packets"?

Other tank and motorized divisions of the Red Army were placed no closer than a few tens of kilometers from the border, where no artillery fire could reach. Moreover, by June 22, all of them were to be withdrawn from the military camps to the areas of concentration. All rifle divisions located in the border zone were also to be withdrawn several kilometers from the border, to the line of prepared positions. And why were the 22nd tank and two rifle divisions sticking out near the border, despite the cover plans and orders of the General Staff?

Being asked about this at the trial, the commander of the district, Pavlov, and the commander of the 4th Army, Korobkov, tried to shift the blame on each other. This conversation, given what we already know, is more interesting than it sounds. So: **“I plead guilty to the fact that**

I did not have time to check the fulfillment by the commander of the 4th Army, Korobkov, of my order to evacuate troops from Brest. Back in early June, I gave the order to withdraw units from Brest to the camps. Korobkov, however, did not comply with my order, as a result of which three divisions were defeated by the enemy when leaving the city ...

...

Pavlov: “After I gave the order to the commanders to bring the troops into combat condition (is this some kind of new army term? - *E.P.*), **Korobkov reported to me that his troops were ready for battle. In fact, it turned out that at the first shot his troops fled.**

I did not check the state of combat readiness of the 4th Army in Brest. I took Korobkov's word about the readiness of his units for battle .

Citizen Pavlov will continue to try to present himself as a banal gouging. Didn't check, you see... A quarter of a century in the army - and didn't check! But let's listen to Korobkov. ***"Presiding. During the preliminary investigation, the defendant Pavlov gave the following testimony about you: "I consider the on actions of Chief of Staff Sandalov and Commander of the 4th Army Korobkov as treacherous activity. On their sector, the main enemy mechanized group made a breakthrough and reached Rogachev, and at such a fast pace only because the command did not comply with my orders for the early withdrawal of units from Brest. Korobkov. The order to withdraw units from Brest was not given by anyone.***

I personally have not seen such an order.

Pavlov. In June, on my orders, the commander of the 28th Rifle Corps, Popov, was sent with the task of evacuating all troops from Brest to the camps by June 15.

Korobkov. I didn't know about it. This means that Popov should be prosecuted for not following the order of the commander"[35] . Major General Popov, despite the fact that he was a

Cossack and a tsarist officer, was not brought to justice by anyone. Perhaps he didn't even interrogate - because it's hard to believe that the district commander forgot such words as "encryption", "directive", "telegram", with the help of which orders were usually given, or, in extreme cases, the term "communications officer" . To the question of the presiding officer, the former commander of the district had to present drafts of the relevant directives, or at least call his chief of staff, sitting next to him in the dock, as witnesses - there were, there were directives! Instead, he spins a clumsy tale about a command given to a certain general. But it's actually even more disgusting. After all, the army understood that the war was close, that the units were located extremely unsuccessfully. The commanders of the Red Army could be reproached for many things, but not for the lack of initiative, and they constantly reminded the command that the units were badly

located, that they had to be removed from the fortress. And how did the district react to these reminders? Word to the Witnesses:

Lieutenant Colonel Sinkovsky (at that time a major, chief operational department of the headquarters of the 28th rifle corps of the 4th army):

"... The command of the 28th SC filed a petition with the command of the 4th army for permission to withdraw the 6th and 42nd divisions from the fortress. Permission was not given..." The

commander of the 28th Rifle Corps is exactly the same Major General Popov, whom Pavlov referred to in court. Perhaps he was nevertheless interrogated - and he already told everything!

Colonel General Sandalov, on the eve of the war - Colonel, Chief of Staff of the 4th Army (it was he who replaced the commander and stopped the withdrawal of the army). **"... It was urgently**

required to change the location of the 22nd tank division, to which, however, the district did not give its consent ... "

Major General of Aviation Belov (then - Colonel, commander of the 10th mixed air division): "On

June 20, I received a telegram from the chief of staff of the air force of the district, Colonel S. A. Khudyakov (he was not repressed - E. P.) with the order of the commander of the air force of the district: "Bring the units on combat readiness. Leave to the command staff is prohibited. Recall those who are on vacation."

Immediately the order of the commander was transferred to the unit. The regimental commanders also received my order: "The planes should be dispersed outside the border of the airfield, and slits should be dug there to shelter personnel. The personnel from the location of the camp should not be released."

I reported the order of the commander of the Air Force of the district to the commander of the 4th Army, General Korobkov, who

answered me: - I have no such order. On the same day, I went to the member of the Military Council, Divisional Commissar

Shlykov. - Comrade Commissar, an order has been received from the commander of the district air force - to put the units on combat readiness. I ask you to insist before the district to send the families of the

command staff. - We wrote to the district to be allowed to withdraw one division, some warehouses and a hospital from Brest. We were told: "We allow only part of the hospital to be transferred." So it is useless to raise this question .

"[36]

—

It turns out that Pavlov not only did not order, on the contrary, he directly forbade the withdrawal of units from the fortress. Another thing is strange: why did Korobkov not ask, did not demand such permission from the command? And if he demanded, then why didn't he say a word about it at the trial - about his reports and the prohibitions of the district command?

The court concluded that both were guilty. The chief of staff of the 4th army, Sandalov, was not arrested, which means that the withdrawal of troops was hampered at the district level, otherwise he would have been tried, too, as the chief of staff of the Klimovskikh district was tried and shot.

But this is only the first act of analyzing the actions of General Pavlov. Because everything again was much more curious. Let's go back to the minutes of the court session:

"Pavlov. I plead guilty to the fact that I understood the directive of the General Staff of the Red Army in my own way and did not put it into effect in advance, that is, before the enemy attack. I knew that the enemy was about to move out, but from Moscow they assured me that everything was in order, and I was ordered to be calm and not panic ... "[37]

Well, everything is more interesting and more interesting. What directive are you talking about? The one now called "Directive No. 1?" And how, excuse me, can you understand it "in your own way"? In the same place, everything is said very specifically, based on army thinking. And then, what about the other directives? For example, on June 18, after which "parts of the district were not put on alert"? Go ahead. On October 7,

1941, the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the Western Front, Major General Semenov and his deputy, Colonel Fomin, were tried. They were accused of having shown criminal negligence and carelessness in preparing and putting the troops of the district on combat readiness, and did not take proper measures to ensure the prompt deployment of military units. There was no talk of treason and participation in a conspiracy [38] .

So: at the trial, Semyonov claimed that even before the start of the war, he had repeatedly proposed withdrawing units and formations of the district from their places of permanent deployment and taking them 10 km from the border. The district command, again, did not accept the proposal. It turns out that the directives of the General Staff were not carried out not only in Brest, but in the entire district?

In 1952, answering questions from the Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff, Major General Lyapin, the former chief of staff of the 10th Army, also noted this. ***“All orders of the headquarters of the ZAPOVO were aimed at creating a benevolent atmosphere in the minds of subordinates. The “bagpipe” with the approval of the plan for the defense of the state border developed by us, on the one hand, the clear preparation of the enemy for decisive actions, which we were informed in detail through the intelligence agencies, on the other hand, completely disoriented us and set us up not to attach serious importance to the current situation ...***

Judging by the fact that a few days before the start of the war, the district headquarters began to organize a command post, the commander of the ZAPOVO troops was oriented about the timing of a possible outbreak of war. However, for some reason, he didn’t demand any —

action from us ... ”[39] The Chief of Communications of the Western Front Grigoriev, the same one whose subordinates were not issued cartridges and gas masks on June 18 and who just mentioned the

directive (I wish he didn’t know about it!), said in court: ***“The war ... took the Western Special Military District by surprise. The peaceful mood that reigned all the time at the headquarters, of course, was transmitted to the troops. Only this “complacency” can explain the fact that the aircraft was caught on the ground by a German raid. The army headquarters were in winter quarters and were defeated, and, finally, part of the troops (the Brest garrison) was bombarded in their win***

Member courts of comrade Orlov. Did the district headquarters feel the approach

of war? Defendant. No. The chief of staff of the Klimovskikh district believed that all our measures for the movement of troops to the border were a precautionary measure.

What a charm, right? These protocols were first published twenty years ago, when the version of the "surprise attack" and "frightened Stalin" still reigned in the minds. Then these people were considered victims of the regime. Ten years ago, they might still have seemed like gouging. But Pavlov is not a boy, he is a military general, a veteran of the First World War and Civil War, fought with the Basmachis, fought in

Spain, was at one time the head of the armored department of the Red Army. That is, service and combat experience had a large and varied. Who, besides traitors, shall we call these people today?

The theme of betrayal by the laborious activities of General Pavlov in the field of sabotage is by no means exhausted. In military memoirs, we can find a lot of strange facts and facts. Here, for example, are the memoirs of Marshal Rokossovsky (KOVO): ***"The orders that followed ... from the district headquarters to the troops to send artillery to the artillery ranges located in the border zone, and other orders that were ridiculous in that situation, caused complete bewilderment."***

Our corps managed to defend its artillery, proving the possibility of practicing artillery exercises in the location of ***the corps, and this saved us in the future . In the 1940s, their division of 76 — .***

mm howitzers stood not far from Brest, and on the very eve of the war they received an order to dismantle all the guns, pack them in boxes and send them to the warehouse, that is, they were left with their bare hands .

"Ridiculous" orders - this is the marshal, softly speaking, veiling. How ridiculous are they? In that situation, these orders are quite meaningful and reasonable. But their goal is different - not to repulse the enemy, but, on the contrary, to make it as easy as possible for him to penetrate Soviet territory. Such actions, very similar to sabotage, were more than enough in the pre-war days.

Here, for example: in the course of preparations for the war, artillery shells that were not put on alert were brought from district warehouses to the 28th Rifle Corps of the ZapOVO. The fact is that shells and fuses for them are stored separately, and only before firing they are equipped - that is, the fuses are screwed on. So, the fuses were not trusted. The shells did not explode when fired, but outwardly looked like normal ones. Most mortar mines did not have fuses at all.

And here is the Baltic District, heavy artillery regiment of the 16th Rifle Corps of the 11th Army. Either on the 19th or on the 20th of June a commission from the district headquarters arrived there. The general who led it ordered that the sights be removed from the guns and handed over for inspection to the district workshop in Riga, 300 kilometers from the location of the unit. True, the regiment commander did not comply with the order after the departure of the commission. And in the howitzer artillery regiment of the 75th division of the same 4th army (ZapOVO) on June 19, all optical devices, including stereo tubes, were taken to Minsk. Naturally, by June 22 they were not returned back. And the general, who came to the gunners of PribOVO, allowed the commanders of the units to go to Kaunas on the weekend, to their families.

An interesting story happened to the air defense of the same Western District. Researcher D. Egorov in his book "The Defeat of the Western Front" cites the testimony of Lieutenant General Strelbitsky, who in 1941 was the commander of the 8th anti-tank brigade. German pilots in the sky over Lida behaved strangely. They bombed, as if they were at school, without fear of anti-aircraft fire at all - and the anti-aircraft guns were silent. The division commander replied to Colonel Strelbitsky that the day before he had received an order: "Do not succumb to a provocation, do not open fire on aircraft." The anti-aircraft gunners began to shoot only when the colonel came to them with a pistol in his hand. Four cars were hit right there, and now the most interesting thing. Three captured German pilots said: they knew about the ban on air defense to open fire.

And what happened to our pilots ...

It must be said that the creators of the Soviet historical myth vaguely felt that something was not connected with the pilots. If the infantry, not brought to combat readiness, simply did not have time to take up positions, then the pilots, even having received a directive at 2 o'clock in the morning, did. They just had to take off - and they had already left the stationary airfields. They are not there, and there is

nothing to bomb. A curious attempt to explain this inconsistency was made in Ozerov's film The Battle for Moscow. There, the planes could not repulse the enemy because ... the NKVD started concreting the runways! Indeed, such work was carried out on part of the airfields - but how did they relate to the aviation of that time? Most of

Soviet aircraft took off in a simple way, from the ground. There were no runways at all on field airfields - camouflage. This is not an airfield, not an airfield, this is a meadow, here the collective farmers mow the grass ...

So why was the point of Directive No. 1 regarding the transfer of aircraft to field airfields (previously it was impossible to do this - German intelligence officers would have tracked down, mapped and hit) was carried out only in the Odessa military district? There, the aviation chief tried to rock the boat that a night flight was dangerous, should we not wait until the morning - but they clicked on him, he transferred his falcons and ... survived. The rest of the Air Force commanders were less fortunate, and their air units were even less fortunate: in the very first hours of the war, the Germans subjected all permanent airfields available to them to a massive bomb attack. The flyers were not only not transferred from there - they were not even warned about the possible outbreak of war.

Air Marshal Golovanov recalls the most curious things in his memoirs. His regiment stood in the rear, near Smolensk. The situation in the district was so peaceful that Golovanov, having received a message about the outbreak of war, ... did not believe him. Directives on the last pre-war night were not sent to their regiment, it concerned border units. The day before, at three o'clock in the morning on June 21, the regiment conducted a drill. The next day was declared a day off, on Saturday evening a dance was held in the club. Golovanov went home, took a book and read until dawn. I was about to go to bed when the phone rang.

“... I picked up the phone and heard from Minsk the excited voice of the district duty

officer: “Combat alert, the Germans are bombing Lida! Such calls in connection with training alarms were not

uncommon at that time. “Comrade on duty,” I replied, “give the personnel at least one day to rest. Only yesterday I raised the regiment according to my plan. Can't it

be postponed? “The Germans are bombing Lida, I have no more time,” replied attendant and turned off.

I called the regimental duty officer, handed over the conditional alarm code; without haste, I put on my boots and left the house... On the street, I saw pilots, navigators, gunners, radio operators, gunners running to th

engineers, technicians, on the go putting on waist belts and fastening tunic buttons.

- Give out fuses? - the one who ran up asked me armaments engineer.

The question took me by surprise, the fuses were in sealed boxes, and I did not conduct the alarm.

- Deliver the boxes with fuses to the parking lots of aircraft by squadron, without my instructions do not open!

All were assembled. The flight crew was waiting for tasks. I instructed the chief of staff to report to Minsk on readiness and ask for further instructions. Five minutes later,

the chief of staff came and said that the connection with Minsk was not working. Well, it happens in the exercises. They check what the commander will do in the absence of communication ... I decided to call the corps commander Colonel Skripko and ask how things are going with him ... ”

Here it is necessary to

clarify: Golovanov's regiment was of central subordination, and Colonel Skripko's corps was the ZapOVO air unit. According to the logic of things, he should have been told more than the "Muscovite" Golovanov. Nevertheless...

From Skripko's voice, I realized that I woke

him up, and he knows nothing about any anxieties. And only at that moment the thought flashed through my mind that the duty officer from Minsk was telling me the truth!

I told Skripko about the conversation with the officer on duty in the district, that I had put the regiment on alert, and that I had no connection with Minsk. Skripko promised to contact Minsk or Moscow via corps communication channels. There were agonizing minutes of waiting ... Only in the afternoon we learned about the war, and then on the radio, from the appeal of V. M. Molotov to the population ”[42].

Let us pay attention once again: Golovanov's regiment is of central subordination. If he didn't know that the war was about to start from Minsk, then why wasn't he informed about the same from Moscow? And where did the connection with the district go? It's not a border strip, it's rear...

Golovanov's regiment was stationed far from the border, so that its commander could afford to remain in thought. Border air units were not so lucky.

Curious things were told already in our time by Lieutenant General Dolgushin, who during the war was a fighter pilot. Their regiment was in the ZapOVO, the airfield was, consider, on the very border - five kilometers from it. On Friday, June 20, Pavlov, the commander of the aviation district of Kopets, and their own divisional commander flew to them. The pilots reported on the results of reconnaissance - they noticed that the airfields on the German side were literally packed with bombers. Now look what happened the next day. Vasily Bardov, well-known at military-historical forums, on the Aviaforum website posted recordings of his own conversations with Dolgushin[43], where he says:

“We finished flying at about 18:00. At 19 o'clock we were disarmed - an order was received to “remove weapons and ammunition from aircraft and place them in storage rooms” - plank and plywood sheds behind the tail of the aircraft ...

And we asked: “Why did they take off their weapons?! Who issued such an idiotic order? Emelianenko even turned to the commander of the regiment and said: “Well, why” ?! And the regiment commander explained to the squadron commanders: “The order of the

commander”, and the squadron commanders to us ”[44] . Vasily Bardov believes that we are talking about Pavlov, but this is not at all necessary. Orders to the air regiments were to

be given by the district air force commander. But let's continue ... “To this day, much has been done as if“ by order ”: the repair of the base airfield in the city of Lida began, spare sites were not prepared, the number of

minders and gunsmiths was reduced to one per link ... Bards. And what was it like before? Dolgushin. And before it was: a technician (it was an officer, as a rule, a lieutenant technician), a mechanic, a minder and a gunsmith. And then they thought that the artilleryman was polishing his gun, the infantry was polishing his rifle - and why shouldn't the pilots scrub it?! And they took it from us! And then,

immediately in the first months of the war, everything was introduced! They immediately entered: they felt that they had done an idiocy! And

covered with duralumin and a hatch where to stick a cannon - it is also duralumin and everything is on stilettos - you will rip your

hands off! The alarm in the regiment was announced at 2.30, even before the German attack. But the pilots, instead of running up to the planes, began to carry boxes of ammunition and put back the guns. As a result, the regiment began to rise into the air at about 6.30 - 7

hours.

There is more evidence of this kind. Here, for example, is an interview with pilot Anatoly Korol. Before the war, his regiment was relocated to the Vysoko-Mazovetsk airfield in Western Belarus, 30 kilometers from the border. **"On June 21 or 22, the regiment commander appointed exercises and ordered**

the weapons to be removed from the aircraft. The commander of the Belarusian military district was supposed to be present at the exercises. On Saturday, the 21st, he could not come, there were no exercises. And on the 22nd, early in the morning, at the beginning of the fifth, a combat alarm sounded . The 13th High Speed Bomber Wing had several

differently - but with the same result:

"... On Sunday, June 22, a day off was announced in the 13th air regiment. Everyone was delighted: they did not rest for three months! The last two days were especially tense, when, on orders from the air division, the regiment was engaged in two hundred hours of maintenance work, that is, in other words, the pilots and technicians disassembled the aircraft into its component parts, cleaned, adjusted them, lubricated and reassembled. They worked from dawn to dusk. On Saturday evening, leaving behind the senior chief of the operator

of the headquarters, Captain Vlasov, the command of the air regiment, many pilots and technicians left for their families in Russia, and those who remained in the camp with the offensive went to an improvised club to watch a new sound feature film "Musical The entire air garrison remained in the care of the internal on History". service, which was headed by junior lieutenant Usenko, on duty for the camp collection .

In the 10th Special Air Division on June 21, in the afternoon, they received an order from the district to cancel combat readiness and allow vacations. True, there the command, after a little thought, nevertheless decided to play it safe and did not follow the order.

These are all examples of outright betrayal. There were also many acts on the verge of gouging and sabotage. For example, shortly before the war, they began to import new aircraft to the border airfields, but they did not send instructors. On the ground, they tried to organize training on their own, "according to instructions," but nothing came of it. And most of these modern, latest models of aircraft were either destroyed or went to the Germans. Or, for

example, the dying act of the commander of the Air Force ZapOVO Kopets. At 9.30 am on June 22, he transferred the 9th, 10th and 11th mixed air divisions to operational subordination to the commanders of the 3rd, 4th and 10th armies. As a result, the pilots fell into a management hole: the district headquarters did not control them, but the commanders had no time for them (and the commander of the 4th Army, who was dying in Brest, Korobkov, did not care at all). The pilots were actually left to their own devices - without

information, without control. And here is how the regiment in which Dolgushin served died. ***"It's getting dark, and the command is for us to 'fly to Lida.' Our regiment takes off first. And in Lida, only half of the airfield remained[47] ... We flew in, sat down. There is no fuel, no ammunition... The pilots made 3-4 sorties without eating, the temperature is high, everyone is dirty, sweaty... The fuel is in the tank, underground. What to get? There are not even buckets - and our tanks are almost empty. The technical staff is still catching up with us. In general, they flew. They had supper and went to bed. Settled in a hotel, in the basement. This was a three-story building. They just fell asleep - alarm ... They went up to the planes - but the tanks were empty. What to do? Nobody knows anything. How to run cars? There was nothing ... As soon as we entered the basement: one after the other six, eight Me-110 went - and both regiments were completely bombed. And we can't do anything! There were a lot of serviceable planes, but***

How simple - there is fuel, but there is nothing to refuel. Remember, the headquarters of PribOVO was especially worried about funnels and buckets? In this case, the lack of buckets caused the death of two air regiments. And in total, according to Wikipedia, 738 aircraft were lost on June 22, including 528 aircraft destroyed at airfields or abandoned during the retreat.

This did not happen in one ZapOVO. The annual report on the combat activities of the Air Force of the North-Western Front for the period from 06/22/41 to 07/1/42 says in black and white:

“Disregarding the fact that on June 19, 1941, due to the unfavorable situation created, the units were ordered to go on combat readiness and disperse the materiel from the base airfields to the operational ones, to withdraw the PribVO headquarters to the command post in the Panevezys area, to the command and aviation no specific instructions were given to units, but on the contrary, on the night of 20/21 and from 21/22/6/41, aviation units were ordered to carry out night training flights. As a result, most of the bomber regiments were subjected to enemy bombing raids at the time of the post-flight inspection of the materiel and refueling. The flight personnel had just been dismissed for rest after night work ... ” [49] As we can see, similar things happened in different

districts, including those where there —

were no special claims against the commander (Kuznetsov, commander of the North-Western Front, was not repressed) . But if there were no complaints against the commander, then to whom then did they arise? After all, they should have arisen, they certainly should! And now let's remember the famous "list of 25". These are twenty-five people who were shot on October

28, 1941 in Kuibyshev. It is believed that they were executed without trial, on the basis of Beria's order, but in fact, the text of this order says in black and white that the special assignment officer of the NKVD special group (in other words, the executioner) “is invited to leave for the city of Kuibyshev and carry out the verdict is capital punishment (to be shot) in respect of the following prisoners...”[50] So, there was a verdict. Yes, why shouldn't he be - in the first months of the war, quite officially, according to the court, they shot enough people with considerable stars, why is there a special relationship with this? —

And here's what's interesting: out of the 25 members of this list, at least a third is somehow related to the Air Force.

Colonel General Stern - Head of the Main Directorate of Air Defense of the NPO. Pilots recall that air defense systems on

airfields were very few or non-existent.

Colonel General Loktionov - from November 1937 to November 1939 - head of the Red Army Air Force, then, until July 1940 -

Deputy People's Commissar for Aviation.

Lieutenant General Smushkevich - replaced Loktionov as head of the Red Army Air Force, in August 1940 he became inspector general of the Air Force, and in December - assistant chief of the General Staff of the Red Army for aviation.

Lieutenant General Rychagov - Smushkevich's successor as head of the Red Army Air Force, and from February to April also deputy people's commissar for aviation. Divinzhener

Sakrier - Deputy Chief of Armament and Supply of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force. Major General Volodin -

Chief of Staff of the Red Army Air Force. Lieutenant General

Proskurov - this generally has a tortuous career. A dashing ace of the Spanish war, upon his return, from some fright, he was appointed head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army. As expected, he failed, after which in September 1940 he was appointed commander of the Air Force of the Far Eastern Front, and in October - assistant chief of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force for long-range bomber aviation.

Lieutenant General Arzhenukhin - in 1938-1940. was chief of staff of the Red Army Air Force, then became the head of the Military Academy of the command and navigators of the Air Force. Major

Nesterenko - Deputy Commander of the Special Purpose Regiment and Rychagov's wife. Women were rarely shot in the Soviet Union, and the capital punishment applied to a woman suggests that the case was very serious. To these nine we can add Lieutenant General

Ptukhin, commander of the KOVO Air Force, Major General Ionov, commander of the PribOVO Air Force, Major General Tayursky, commander of the ZapOVO Air Force and, undoubtedly, the commander of ^{deputy} the Air Force of this district, Major General Kopets, if he had not shot himself. There were also arrested and shot generals of aviation - a pogrom at the top of the Air Force staged the most severe. All these people were accused of anti-Soviet conspiracy and, of course, long ago rehabilitated. We had no conspiracy, no sabotage. And the guns were removed from the planes

not otherwise than on the direct instructions of Stalin - the mustachioed villain wanted more people to die, even more ...

And again I foresee the reaction of the reader: "So you, madam, believe that everything happened because of the

betrayal of the generals?" Well, not all - but something happened. For example, Minsk was taken on the fifth day of the war precisely for this reason. Because the commander of the ZAPOVO Pavlov exposed his units to defeat and opened the front to the Germans, as was said at the trial. The pogrom of our Air Force

seems to have occurred in many respects for the same reason. But in general, such an explanation of events is just a match for the fairy tale about the stupid and gullible Stalin, who did not allow the troops to be put on alert. Stalin was smart and distrustful, he did everything right, but the traitors set us all up.

However, again there are problems with reality.

Stalin could not take into account betrayal in his calculations - simply because a well-known traitor instantly becomes a former one. However, he did not assume that the Germans could be thrown back from our borders. Molotov, more than forty years later, recalled how, before the war with Stalin, they pondered how far our troops would retreat - to Smolensk or to Moscow itself. And evacuation plans (by the way, the fact that the evacuation was carried out impromptu is also a bike) were drawn up up to and including Moscow. When they are going to fight with little bloodshed on foreign territory, the evacuation of half of the country is not prepared in advance. And Hitler was too sure of victory. But he was a sober and cautious politician and until then he did not bury himself. What's the matter? What was the

miscalculation of the Soviet leadership, because of which the tragedy of 1941 occurred? Let's answer this in Odessa, that is, with a question to the question: was it at all, this miscalculation? Maybe there is something we don't know? Oh yeah! And

a very important thing. Namely, what did is the Red Army. True, not only the Bolsheviks are to blame ...

Chapter

8 Poor, poor Comrade Voroshilov!

The Red Army arose on the basis of the imperial one - its creators simply had no other way. To the credit of the Soviet leaders, they realized the need for a regular army early - by the spring of 1918. As well as the fact that they themselves, without the involvement of tsarist officers, are not capable of anything in this area. The tsarist officers were, of course, completely old-fashioned "nobles" and "excellencies", and even ran from side to side like hares, but they knew how the military machine functions. It was supposed that everything good would be taken from the old army, rejecting everything bad ... but nothing was really supposed! The war was gaining momentum, and the Red and White armies were sculpted on the go, from what was, and what had grown, had grown ... But nothing could grow except what was sown. And the seed material was originally from the Russian Empire.

And here's what is remarkable: when they talk about the glory of the Russian army - who is remembered? Suvorov, Kutuzov, Admiral Ushakov, even Alexander Nevsky. But what about the last half century before the revolution - where are they, the great commanders and glorious victories? The beginning of the century turned out to be gloomy in general: first, the lost Russian-Japanese war, then the First World War, which was extremely unsuccessful for our army. And Suvorov and Kutuzov - they were a very long time ago ... Why is everything like that? The backbone of any army, which determines its spirit and order, is officers. The basis of the officer corps of the

German army was

the hereditary military in many generations, in which the service grew into genes. In the Russian army, alas, it was

not at all.

The tsarist officers inherited by the Red Army were divided into two categories: personnel (that is, pre-war training), and wartime officers. The second - non-commissioned officers produced during the war, volunteers and other similar public, hastily learned in short-term (3-4 months) ensign schools. On

at the platoon level - they knew their business well, then the difficulties associated with the lack of military education began. But there was no time to seriously teach in the war, and there was no need.

But regular officers, if you dig deeper, turn out to be far from first-class. Alas, magnificent patriotic officers and highly professional drivers companies and battalions, for the "gentlemen" of most part, were the fruit of Soviet propaganda. If they were related to reality, then to the Guards. Their layer was thin, like froth on milk, and under them the army sea swayed. Or, more correctly, a swamp? Let's take Rasul Mukhlisov's monograph "Commanders of the Red Army"[51]

— , which gives a brief outline of the state of affairs in the old army. In order not to get too deep (in such a small work, this is not worth doing), let's limit ourselves to it. The shock will not be weak. Already from the very beginning: "Lack of prestige and traditions of military service in tsarist Russia ..." How is this to be understood?

Yes, whatever you like ... but let's try to offhand recall at least one evidence that in the Russian Empire military service had prestige and traditions (except for massacre). It turns out? Personally, I don't. Except perhaps the fact that the guards were successful at balls - but what does this have to do with the service? It turns out that Mukhlisov is right?

“The lack of prestige and traditions of military service in tsarist Russia ... resulted in the fact that the officer corps was by no means staffed from the best representatives: “Where does the Russian army get its officers from? Most of them leave the cadet schools, where losers of all professions usually flock. An unfinished realist, an expelled classicist, a semi-literate seminarian, a student of an agricultural, technical or commercial school who did not reach the end - this is the usual contingent with which the junker schools are replenished. All these people in the vast majority of cases go to military service, not feeling the slightest vocation for it, only because they have nowhere to go ... The Russian army receives another, much

smaller part of its officers from pupils of the cadet corps and military

schools. These officers have a completed secondary (7 years of the corps) [52] and a sufficient special (2–3 years of college) education”[53].—

The extremely low level of public education in tsarist Russia gave rise to a monstrous shortage of personnel in all areas, except for agricultural work. According to the 1897 census, literate (i.e., those who could read, nothing more) in the country, there were about 25% of the population. Of these, only an insignificant part (in 1915 - no more than 18%, before that - even less) studied in secondary schools (there is no question of higher education). The industrial rise that began in Russia, though pathetic, nevertheless, absorbed all the least able people, leaving low-paid professions such as teachers and the military, only scraps. What came of it, General Snesev described: ***“In the Russian army ... the officer corps was divided into two parts:***

the privileged - pupils of military schools and pages - filled the ranks of the guards, artillery and had a quick and secure production, another democratic part, mainly from the losers, graduated from the cadet school and made thickness of the army infantry, the position of company commander was the crowning achievement for the vast majority. In terms of military training, general education and a modest social position, the Prussians equated our officers from the cadet schools with their non-commissioned officers and were right in many respects .

If we talk about career prospects, then in Russia the highest command positions were divided into approximately three equal parts. The first belonged to the officers of the General Staff, the second - to the guards, and only a third remained for the bulk of the officer corps - the army.

But that's not all! Muklisov continues (and we believe, because with the end of the USSR observed the same thing in different areas of life):

“The service itself, its conditions were set in such a way that in the future the negative aspects inherent in young officers were not corrected, but only aggravated. On the one hand, this was due to the difficult financial situation of ordinary officers and their low social status. This situation not only complicated the recruitment of a high-quality contingent of cadets to military schools, but also led to a negative selection of officer

composition during subsequent service. As a result, the higher the officers rose through the ranks, the fewer capable people remained among them.

Simply put, only those who did not

succeed in

dump her.

The trouble was aggravated by the fact that after 1812 in Russia more and more people forgot what the army was for. (In general, an army without a war very quickly becomes a ritual part of the state organism.) **“On the other hand, the system of**

education and training of an officer has developed in the army, which by no means contributed to the education of leadership and strong-willed qualities necessary for a commander - first of all, activity, initiative, independence. Yes, and directly military training during the service was distinguished by isolation from real life, a passion for theorizing to the detriment of the development of practical skills ... The current system also did little to increase the intellectual level of the bulk of officers ... ”So the features of training were also added to the features of personnel selection and service . In a terrifying way, an article in the "Russian Invalid" for 1907,

written following the results of the Russian-Japanese war, echoes the pre-perestroika situation. **“Among the mass of orders, instructions, regulations and instructions dedicated to the soldier, there is not even a hint that in the training of the army the first place and special attention should be given to the officer ... The first**

thing that is most striking in the service of a combat officer is the complete absence of classes to prepare an officer for the upcoming combat activity ... The goal of training an officer should be to develop the ability to act and make decisions in the field under various conditions, in accordance with the task and in connection with other parts, we are accustomed to operate in a vacuum, without any situation other than a plan terrain... Having completely neglected... the officer's military education, giving nothing to his mind, we have limited all officer work only to the training of subordinate lower ranks and household chores – and this is in all command positions...”[55]

Apparently, all this should have been compensated by something, at least in moral terms. What exactly? The story of the protopresbyter of the Russian army and navy Georgy Shavelsky about his trip to Libava in 1911 suggests some thoughts. There, a story happened to him, quite worthy of Comrade Stalin:

“The sailors honored me with dinner in their naval assembly. The hall was full of guests. As usual, speeches were made. Particularly vivid was the speech of the chairman of the naval court, Col. Yurkovskiy... He spoke about the high mood of the garrison and ended his speech: “Tell His Majesty that we are all ready to lay down our lives for the Tsar and the Fatherland.” I responded with a

speech, the content of which was as follows: “Your willingness to sacrifice yourself is very honorable and worthy of the title that you bear. But still, the task of your being and your service is not to die, but to win. If you all return unharmed, but with victory, the Tsar and the Motherland will joyfully crown you with laurels; if all of you die valiantly, but do not achieve victory, the Motherland will plunge into pure mourning.

So: do not die, but win!” As I remember now, these simple words literally stunned everyone. Perplexity and surprise were read on the faces: what kind of heresy is the protopresbyter preaching!?”[56]

And how were they going to fight, I wonder? As in the song "Varangian"? So about the enemy, whose example is the sailors who blow up their own ships, any adversary can only dream of. And any kind of sacrifice that redeems unprofessionalism is unlikely to appeal to an ordinary soldier - after all, it is he who has to carry out this sacrifice in practice, and he is not to blame for anything at all. (And I didn't like it - the Russian soldier demonstrated this in 1917, simply leaving the front.) The imperial army demanded

an urgent reform - but then the revolution broke out, and it fell apart, putting the government before the fact: the war is on, but there is no one to fight. To put together a new army on some other basis than the one already in place would be far worse madness than changing horses at the crossing. So the hastily formed Red Army in everything related to regularity, organization, training of commanders, could only be

worsened copy of the royal one. But we haven't said a word about paints yet ...

Kraskoms (red commanders) - the second half of the officer corps of the Red Army. These were the people who were brought forward by the revolution. A typical painter was Voroshilov, a labor leader who in 1905 created workers' squads, in 1918 a self-defense detachment in Lugansk, and by the end of the year he had already become an army commander. Yakir is a turner, he briefly commanded self-defense detachments, then he became a commissar, then he suddenly turned out to be a division commander. These were bright, charismatic characters, born leaders, but completely without military education and experience. They were joined by wartime officers of the already civil war - rapidly advanced former tsarist non-commissioned officers, such as Budyonny and Chapaev. The Kraskoms brought a powerful stream of partisanism into the already badly organized army, and in their heads scraps of military science were bizarrely mixed with scraps of the

Communist Manifesto. There were also absolutely incredible hybrids like Comrade Tukhachevsky in the Red Army. A graduate of the prestigious Alexander School, somehow versed not only in tactics, but even in strategy (but just somehow - how much can you learn in two years?), Who fought for five months as a platoon commander and advanced to the army commander at the same time, that Voroshilov and just as swiftly

- that's who he is? In the porridge of the Civil with its reds, whites, greens, partisans and rebels, such an army could fight and win. But the next war was to be a war of regular armies. If the new government did not want its country to be torn apart into colonies, it had to create an army suitable for modern warfare - in an already underdeveloped, and now also completely ruined country.

After the end of the Civil War, the Red Army was reduced tenfold - to half a million. And such and such a country could hardly feed. In the second half of the 1920s, they started talking almost seriously about the transition to the militia system, and not because of

socialist utopias of the "armed people" type, but because of a severe lack of funds. The officer corps

was reduced significantly. There were far more people who wanted to stay in the army than there were places for them. Service in the army and generally not sugar, but in the then - especially, but in civilian life it was much worse. Competition for a place "in the ranks" exacerbated the split among the command staff. The OGPU, reporting on the situation in the Red Army,

noted: ***"The command staff in their midst retained their old habits and manners and treats the Kraskoms as an extra element for the army ... In the 27th division, two groups were created - officer and Kraskom; among the paint committees there was even a tendency to kill one of the old officers ... In the armored brigade of the Western Front, the officers in every possible way survive***

the junior command staff, paint committees and members of the RCP (b). Some of the "features" of the old

army were also revived - and no commissars were an obstacle to this: ***"Instances of the rudeness of the command staff in their treatment of the Red Army, the exploitation of the Red Army, their use as batmen are quite common ... The rudeness of the command staff in the 3rd infantry reserve school caused great excitement among the cadets, thanks to the skillful approach of the political staff it was and only possible to avoid [57] the demand for excesses. In the food base of the VHU of the Zapfront, the commanding officers and the military commissar from the Red Army and employees stand at attention and answer: "that's right" and "no way." In the armored brigade of the Western Front, the Red Army soldiers of one division went on a hunger strike due to***

And of course, all the time, from one unit to another, the same:

"Drunkenness of the commanding officers is very common ... In parts of the Western Front, drunkenness is also very common ... In the 16th army corps, drunkenness is accompanied by gambling and card games, which has a corrupting effect on the Red Army. In the 37th division of the Western Front, there was a case when a drunken chief of staff of one of the regiments, exposing his saber, shouted: "Beat the Jews, save

Everyone drank, from fighters to commanders. Dovbor, an assistant to the head of the information department of the intelligence unit of the Western Front, was expelled from the party in 1920 for appearing drunk for negotiations with the Poles. Where to next!

And they had fun, too. After the end of the war, an epidemic of duels among commanders suddenly broke out. Even in 1925, about 90 duels took place in the Red Army. Of these, 60 were fatal: "Comrade Mauser" and "Comrade Nagant" were better than traditional dueling pistols, and they fired from them at the front. The prescribed punishment - up to 6 years in prison - of course, commanders who have just gone through the hardest war, do not

stopped.

... On the other hand, the war ended, and I wanted to live beautifully. The same Dovbor, who was expelled from the party for appearing drunk for negotiations, in 1923, after the service, changed into a civilian suit, put on a hat, took a cane and went to have fun. How - history is silent, but he must have walked well if for this reason he was never accepted back into the party. But this, so to speak, is the entertainment of army trifles. Upstairs, things were much worse. After the defeat of Kolchak, the former chief of staff of the Southern Front, Spider, was appointed chief of staff of the troops of the Kyiv district. Arriving in Kyiv, he first occupied the governor's house, where he began to give receptions, to which he invited the military and party leaders. The top went there with pleasure. Frunze's former assistant, V. A. Olderogge, who became the inspector of the infantry of Ukraine and the Crimea, brought with him two magnificent horses. Soon he began to arrange horse races at the Kiev hippodrome, and his daughters kept a sweepstakes there. There is nothing to even condemn them for - they did not imagine that it could be somehow different ...

The Red Army had a lot of good things, and first of all, motivation. The Russian soldier, at best, did not understand why he was being driven to war with the German, at worst, he understood and, at the first opportunity, began to break up the army and stop the war without prior notice. The Red Army soldiers, on the other hand, had an iron motivation: life in the Russian Empire was unbearable for an ordinary person, and the revolution gave hope for the best, and they were ready to bite their throats to anyone who would drive them into their former hell. Especially after life really got better. But you can't win a war with motivation alone: you need strategy and tactics,

training of officers and training of privates. And with this it was sad not only in 1921, but twenty years later. By the way,

about ordinary people. The Red Army, although it was called the worker-peasant army, was formed almost exclusively from peasants. As of 1932, there were no more than 25% of the townspeople in the country, and they were almost completely absorbed by the rapidly developing industry. To draft a worker into the army bordered on counter-revolution. But in the monstrously overpopulated village there were a lot of extra people, young guys went to the army willingly - a social lift! However, the quality of recruits was simply inexpressible! On July 26, 1932, Commissar Voroshilov wrote to Stalin: **"On**

July 13, at the Totsk training ground AT VO [58], a group of Red Army soldiers, going to hay, stumbled upon an unexploded shell and, despite the warning of the senior team not to touch the shell, one of the Red Army men raised the shell, and then threw it away. The projectile exploded. As a result, 3 were killed, 7 were injured, of which two died on the same day ... On July 23, in the Minsk region, the cavalry group was returning from classes, leading the horses by rein. The Red Army stumbled ... on an unexploded shell. And again, literally the same story. The senior ordered the Red Army soldier to throw a dangerous toy, and the shell exploded. 2 were killed, 7 were injured, two of them died ... And such outrages are endless, without edge!

... It is absolutely not necessary to be surprised at this. After all, what is a fighter of the Red Army? This is rural Vasya, who in a year at school mastered the letter in warehouses, but he never saw a mechanism more complicated than a plow. Such Vasya walks across the field, finds a projectile, what kind of crap is lying around - he, of course, is neither sleep nor spirit. I saw - I picked it up, the elder shouted: "Do not touch!" — threw. Result: according to the statistics of 1931, in the Red Army, only as a result of accidents, there were 2,000 injuries and 400 deaths. And if only the problem was limited to this! There's still 85 percent of the

iceberg under water. The main problem was not even in injuries, but in the fact that it was simply scary to trust Vasya with anything more complicated than a bayonet. Either the mechanism will break, or it will cripple itself. No, in the end he will learn to shoot - the soldiers of the imperialist were shooting, which means that you can teach. (Moreover, the three-ruler wa

for such a soldier - it is possible to break it, but it is difficult.) And who should be put behind the machine gun? And put in a tank?

With the technical branches of the troops in the Red Army was just a disaster. In 1940, the educational level of conscripts was four classes, and this is when the Soviet educational program has been gaining momentum for ten years now. At older ages, things were even worse. (And by the beginning of the war, the average educational level of the Germans was, in our opinion, 9 classes.)

True, there were rural machine operators and drivers - there were hundreds of thousands of tractors in the village, someone plowed for everyone, and there were a lot of trucks, and someone drove them all. But this does not mean that the rural machine operator will become a tanker just like that. No, he will be able to pull the levers, but in the army the driver is also obliged to repair the mechanism entrusted to him. But here everything is more complicated. In the collective farms, there were no fools to trust tractor operators with the repair of tractors! Tractors and trucks were repaired and serviced at MTS. Is it any wonder that, having accumulated 25,000 tanks by 1941, the Red Army lost them in the very first month of the war? The crew often abandoned the car due to a trifling breakdown.

But let us return to 1932, to Voroshilov's letter. The fighters came entirely from the plow, and there was no one to teach them either. For ten years, the former officers either went on promotion or left the army, but where to get new ones? The problem of personnel did not go away, but, unlike the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union experienced a real, and not a comparative, industrial boom[59] . There was a monstrous, catastrophic lack of educated youth in the country. In the same letter, Voroshilov writes: "The howl is because of the people - there is no command staff."

But everything should be all right with the senior and top command staff, right? Were they still with the civilian army? Well, yes, they stayed. But many of them perceived peaceful life as a long-term vacation. We have an opinion that has the status of an indisputable truth - Voroshilov was an incompetent people's commissar who was in permanent conflict with competent and talented military leaders led by the "great strategist" Marshal Tukhachevsky. The People's Commissar, however, had a different opinion on this matter.

“The trouble is that our commanders, almost all without exceptions do not fully cover the entire multi-complex machine military organization,” Voroshilov writes in the same letter. He softens this: it seems that they did not “not cover”, but frankly scored. Here is an example. On the occasion of “starting off and throwing a projectile” in the Belarusian district, the people's commissar created a commission, which included the commander of the district, Uborevich (one of those very literate and talented ones). He entered and immediately ... left for a vacation for treatment. As if there was nothing. For an incompetent people's commissar, this is

an emergency, but for a “great strategist” - one must understand, a working moment. The letters of the people's commissar are also full of concern about another “great” one - Tukhachevsky, recently appointed chief of armaments of the Red Army. Why is Voroshilov worried? Tukhachevsky “does everything, except for his Office.” What exactly? Shortly before that, being the commander of the district, he bombarded the people's commissar with letters about the reorganization of the Red Army, offering to rivet, for example, those same forty thousand tanks. Now he was appointed chief of armaments, giving him the full opportunity to devote himself to his beloved work - but has he already managed to switch to something else? Judging by the fact that combat training became his next area of activity, he now issued proposals for its improvement.

Moreover, in the summer of 1931, Voroshilov anxiously wrote to Gamarnik: “Look into the matter and see for yourself that M.N. does not crush any of the planned r

After the 20th Congress, much was written about the genius of the repressed military leaders. Here, for example, is how Marshal Zhukov spoke about the commander of the Belarusian military district, Uborevich, the very one who was not interested in five corpses around one shell. ***“He***

was a real Soviet military leader, who perfectly mastered the operational-tactical art. He was in the full sense of the word a military man ... Appearance, ability to hold on, the ability to briefly express his thoughts, everything indicated that IP Uborevich was an outstanding military leader. He appeared in the army when he was least expected. Each of his visits usually began with the rise of units on combat alert and ended with tactical exercises or commander's training.

...

“The best commander of the district was the commander of the 1st rank I.P. Uborevich. None of the commanders gave so much in operational-tactical training to the commanders and headquarters of formations as I.P. Uborevich and the district headquarters under his leadership.

...

“Uborevich was more concerned with issues of operational art and tactics. He was a great connoisseur of both, and an unsurpassed educator of the troops.

...

“After the arrest of the commanders of the troops of the district, I.P. Uborevich and I.P. Belov, the training of senior officers in the district dropped sharply” ...

It always seemed to me that the training of senior command personnel was, after all, basically not the business of the district. There is Moscow, and there are all sorts of courses and academies in it. And it always seemed to me that the business qualities of a person are determined not by the ability to hold on and express their thoughts, but somehow differently. I wonder what condition the

troops entrusted to Comrade Uborevich were in? ...Wandering the Internet, I somehow came across an article with an eloquent title: "The failure of the great military maneuvers of the Red Army in 1935-1936"[60] . During these maneuvers, the troops had to work out the theory of deep operation and deep combat, popular at that time, with the participation and interaction of all branches of the military. This article does not contain any theoretical aspects, only the facts stated in the reports of that time.

And there you can see such operational-tactical training that it's just right to put your pa

A proper offensive must begin with bombing. Result? ***“The squadrons***

of light bombers and attack aircraft R-5, SSS and R-Zet, which were supposed to clear the way for the advancing tanks, essentially failed to do this. Their interaction with mechanized brigades and regiments “failed” (BVO), “was lost completely or was carried out sporadically” (KVO): the organization of communications between aviation and tank headquarters failed. In the KVO, the interaction of tanks with artillery was also lame ... ”

Poor interaction between the combat arms is generally one of the main organic shortcomings of the Red Army. But what about

operational-tactical genius in the person of the commander of the BVO? Or did the neighboring district spoil him? And there, after all, another "great strategist" was also sitting there -

Yakir. Okay, let's not talk about interaction - it's really difficult. Let's talk about the actions of the troops. **"The**

tankers of Yakir and Uborevich advanced blindly - their reconnaissance was poorly organized, did not show activity, and (according to the head of the Combat Training Directorate (UBP) of the Red Army, commander of the 2nd rank A. I. Sedyakin, who was observing the maneuvers) "was incapacitated." As a result, T-26s from the 15th and 17th KVO mechanized brigades repeatedly struck "on an empty place." BT-5 and BT-7 from the 5th and 31st mechanized brigades of the BVO could not detect ambushes (and ambush actions were a favorite technique of German tankers). T-28s from the 1st tank brigade of the BVO "suddenly" (!) found themselves in front of a strip of tank traps and gouges and were forced to turn sharply to the side - to an as yet unexplored piece of terrain, where they got stuck. Needless to say, what would

happen to these tanks in a real war? **"Blindly, the tanks also acted directly in the"**

battle "- the weak training of the tankers, who did not know how to navigate and conduct observation from the tank, already affected here. And the insufficient training of driver-mechanics led to the fact that the battle formations of the attacking tank units "quickly got upset." In this, however, the commanders of platoons, companies and battalions were also to blame, who did not master the skills of radio communications and therefore did not know how to manage their units ... Inconsistency in the actions of companies and battalions was also characteristic of other tank formations.

That's something, but it was quite possible to learn tankers. The Soviet Union already then had the largest number of tanks in the world. It was possible not to shake over each car, but to drive the crews as much as necessary. Well, there were all the conditions for infantry training - the Mosin rifle has such a resource that the edge is not visible, but the sapper shovel does not have it at all. Nevertheless:

"But the infantry of Yakir and Uborevich would have suffered even greater losses in a real battle with the Germans. First, she "everywhere" went on the attack

machine guns of the "enemy" are not in rare chains, but in dense "crowds from squads". "With such constructions, the attack would have been thwarted in reality, drowned in blood," stated A. I. Sedyakin, who himself participated in such attacks in 1916 and then hung on the German wire five times. Reason: "solitary fighters, squads and platoons are undertrained." On the offensive, the fighters instinctively huddled together, and poorly trained squad and platoon commanders were not able to restore the statutory battle order ...

Tanks of direct infantry support would not have helped such "crowds", especially since in the KVO (even in its best 24th and the 44th rifle divisions) neither the infantrymen nor the tankers knew how to interact with each other. The artillery support of the attack would not have saved, especially since in the KVO "the issue of the interaction of artillery with infantry and tanks" was "the weakest" by the summer of 1937, and in the BVO artillery support for the attack was often

ignored altogether ... As for Uborevich's infantry, then she didn't know how to conduct offensive close combat at all. In the maneuvers of 1936, her "offensive" was to move forward evenly. There was no "interaction of fire and movement", that is, squads, platoons and companies went on the attack, ignoring the defense fire, they did not prepare their attack with machine-gun fire, did not practice bedding and dashes, self-digging, did not throw grenades. "Concrete methods of action," A. I. Sedyakin concluded, "automatism in interaction ... have not yet been mastered." The infantry of the KVO also turned out to be poorly

trained in close combat tactics ... However, the infantry of the BVO and KVO still could not effectively prepare their attack with fire: like the entire Red Army on the eve of 1937, the soldiers fired poorly from the DP light machine gun - the main

automatic weapon of small units ... " That is, the fighters did not know how to dig in, throw grenades, shoot from a machine gun, move in dashes (apparently, and crawl too). I wonder if they knew how to shoot from a rifle? And what did the commanders of platoons and squads do during the hours allocated for the training of personnel?

"But even having broken through the defenses of the Wehrmacht, the infantry of Yakir and Uborevich would have been helpless against German counterattacks. In the BVO they knew very well that the distinguishing feature of the conduct of hostilities by the Germans was the destruction of the enemy who had broken through with flank counterattacks of powerful reserves. Nevertheless, Uborevich's advancing infantry did not at all care about guarding their flanks - "even by observation!" The infantry of the KVO also sinned at the Shepetovsky maneuvers. The BVO knew that the Germans always strive for surprise; such an enterprising, active and cunning enemy needed an eye and an eye, but nevertheless Uborevich's infantry very often advanced blindly, completely not caring about the organization of reconnaissance. "It didn't take root," according to A. I. Sedyakin, intelligence in Yakir's rifle divisions - "everyone from top to bottom!" And as a

summary: "Summing

up the work of the troops of the BVO and KVO in the Belarusian and Polesie maneuvers, A. I. Sedyakin revealed the main, in our opinion, vice of the Red Army of the era of Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Uborevich:

"Tactical training of troops, especially a fighter, squad, platoon, vehicle, tank platoon, company, does not satisfy me. But they will fight, take victory in battle, success by the horns "... The worst thing was that such a situation did not show any tendency to improvement."

Here's an interesting one: is there much sense in the fact that the commander of the district is an operational-tactical genius if his fighters do not know how to go

on the attack? By the way, the high art of eyewash, in contrast to the art of training a fighter, in the districts have mastered to the fullest.

"In general, the scourge of the Red Army on the eve of 1937 was the low demands of commanders of all degrees and the numerous simplifications and conventions in the combat training of troops due to it. The fighters were allowed not to disguise themselves at the firing line, not to dig in when the offensive was delayed; the machine gunner was not required to independently choose a position for the machine gun before firing, the signalman was not trained in running and crawling with a telephone set and a cable reel behind his back, etc., etc. Orders for units and formations of the districts of Yakir and Uborevich

they are full of facts of simplifying the rules of the shooting course - here is the unmasking of the "enemy" trenches with white sand, and the demonstration of a moving target for not 5, but 10 seconds, and much more.

The 45th mechanized corps, which so delighted foreign observers at the Kiev maneuvers of 1935, was trained to drive "on the parade ground of a tankodrome on level ground" and, as it turned out already in July 1937, even took small obstacles "with great difficulty." At the same time, commander of the 2nd rank, I. F. Fedko, who replaced Yakir, discovered that in divisional exercises "all the necessary artillery data to support infantry and tanks turn out to be fraudulent, shown only on paper and do not correspond to the real situation, tasks and terrain."

This is how the army looked like, led by the "great strategist" and his comrades. People's Commissar Voroshilov did not refuse responsibility for the economy entrusted to his care, but you must admit that he is not alone blame for his condition.

Chapter

9 Cadres decide everything...

It was not in vain that we ended the last chapter with a description of the state of affairs in two districts where Tukhachevsky's accomplices ruled. Voroshilov did what he could - and did a lot. At least from that half-crowd of half-gang that he inherited after Trotsky, he managed to create, albeit inferior, but still a regular army. However, he ran into a problem that he was unable to overcome. You can call it the problem of personnel, or the problem of Trotsky's nominees, or the problem of the general's mafia - whatever you like, call it that. It consisted in the fact that a fairly close-knit group was sitting at the top of the Red Army, crushing a significant part of the leading posts under itself. If these people worked normally, then let them continue to sit - but you can't call their work normal either because of drunkenness, or in a dream, or in delirium.

Fortunately, this grouping turned out to be almost without exception involved in the generals' conspiracy - if not for the conspiracy, such persons as Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Blucher would not have been knocked over - at least until the next war. The great talents of Tukhachevsky were perfectly shown by Viktor Suvorov in the book "Purification", we have already seen what the two commanders of the most important districts in the country cost, but we'll talk about Marshal Blucher later.

But then, fortunately, the year 1937

came ... Let's not talk much about the "conspiracy of the generals." We only note that according to the testimony given after the arrest by People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Yezhov, there were three conspiratorial groups in the Red Army oriented towards Germany: the "Bonapartist" or Tukhachevsky group, the groups of Yakir and Yegorov. The first two actually merged by the spring of 1937, the third was revealed a little later. And look at the posts these people held (even if their later rehabilitation does not bother us - this act is purely political and has nothing to do with the truth). From June 1931 to May

1937, Marshal Yegorov, who was shot in 1939, was in charge of the General Staff of the Red Army. Air Force commanded

commander of the 2nd rank Alksnis. The Department of Political Propaganda was headed by the army commissar of the 1st rank Gamarnik, he was also the first deputy people's commissar in 1930-1934. Main Artillery Directorate - Commander Efimov arrested in May 1937. The armored command was not at all lucky - two repressed one after another: since 1929, commander of the 2nd rank Khalepsky, then he was replaced by division commander Bokis. (Then things didn't get better: until June 1940 it was headed by Corps Commander Pavlov - the same Pavlov, head of the Western Special.) However, the Air Force was also unlucky. On the other hand, the situation in the tank troops and in aviation by 1941 was especially

desperate.

Here is another important management - personnel. Divisional Commander Garkavy sat there from 1928, then, from 1930, Divisional Commander Savitsky, and in 1934 he was replaced by Commander Feldman. All three were arrested and shot in the "Tukhachevsky case." That is, the personnel service, it turns out, was completely in the hands of Tukhachevsky's team, and you will agree: whoever has the cadres has the real power. The "great strategist" himself, since 1931, was the chief of armaments of the Red Army, and since 1936 - the first deputy people's commissar.

That is, the Red Army was actually ruled by a group that was quite capable of placing its people in key positions. Do you think they took advantage of it or not? And if their plans were to launch a coup on a wave of military failures (according to the conspirators' own testimony, this was one of the scenarios for the future coming to power), did they need the Red Army to be strong and trained? Or did they need something completely different? (However, there is another question: could such people as Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich - typical semi-literate painters, who really did not know anything and did not really study anything - could create something worthwhile from the troops entrusted to them.)

Only after 1938 did new people come to the management of the Red Army - but time had already been lost. And then the final stage of preparation for a big war began - an increase in the number and reform of the army. From 1938 to June 22, 1941, the Red Army grew from 1.5 million to 5 million people, that is, more than three times. However, to raise the number is half the battle. Should have at least

bring it to its senses a little so that it does not crumble at the first blow - there already the war will teach you how to fight. And the state of

the Red Army was, although better than in 1932 - at least, the raised and thrown shells were no longer reported in official documents - but still very far from combat readiness.

Army documents of that time are read - where is the novel. Here is the order "On combat and political training of troops for 1939." It was compiled according to the immortal recipes of Dale Carnegie - at first, at least for something to praise and only then begin to scold. The Red Army men are praised for having "showed excellent examples of work", for "working on fulfilling tasks", for "the ability to defeat the enemy" in the battles near Lake Khasan (we will turn to this victory later). Praised for "a turning point in combat training". And here are the specifics: "The first successes have been achieved in training a fighter to use a hand grenade, a bayonet and a shovel." So, the Red Army soldiers began to succeed in throwing grenades, stabbing with a bayonet and digging in. Praise, however, is worse than abuse...

And then they begin to actually scold - long and carefully. ***"... A completely unacceptable situation with fire preparation.***

In the past year, the troops not only did not fulfill the requirements ... to increase the individual shooting training of fighters and commanders from all models of small arms by at least 15-20% against 1937, but also reduced the results in fire, and especially in shooting from hand and machine guns...

At the same time, the highest, senior and middle commanders, commissars and staff workers themselves are not yet an example for the troops in the ability to wield weapons. The junior commanders are also not taught this business and therefore cannot properly teach the fighters.

There are still, however, individual fighters in the troops, who served for a year, but never fired a live cartridge.

Now we know the answer to the question posed in the previous chapter: did the Red Army know how to shoot? No, she did not know how, and at all levels, from privates to generals. And, by the way, if the fighters were never taken to the shooting range (and only in this case they could never

do not shoot a live cartridge) - what did the Red Army soldiers do in general?

Further, the order notes the absence of a struggle for the implementation of curricula, insufficient exactingness, inattention to combat training on the part of political agencies, a high accident rate and a large number of emergency situations, etc. In short, everyone don't care.

What do commanders and commissars do? And here's what:

"Drunkenness, which has lately taken extremely wide size and became the scourge of the army ...".

As they say, who would doubt. In the army they always drank, they drink and they will drink. But what dimensions and forms did drunkenness have to take in order to be called the "scourge of the army", and even in the very unsterile 30s? Here is the order "On the fight against drunkenness" dated December 28, 1938:

"Recently, drunkenness in the army has taken on truly menacing proportions. Especially this evil took root in the environment commanding staff.

According to far from complete data, in the Byelorussian Special Military District alone for 9 months of 1938, 1,300 ugly cases of drunkenness were noted, in parts of the Ural Military District over 1,000 cases over the same period, and approximately the same unsightly picture in a number of other military

districts ... On October 15, in Vladivostok, four lieutenants, drunk to the point of losing their human form, staged a brawl in a restaurant, opened fire and wounded two citizens. ...

On September 18, two lieutenants of the railway regiment, under approximately the same circumstances in a restaurant, quarreled among themselves, shot

themselves. ... The political instructor of one of the units of the 3rd SD, a drunkard and a brawler, fraudulently collected 425 rubles from junior commanders, stole a watch and a revolver and deserted from the unit, and a few days

later raped and killed a 13-year-old girl. ... On November 8, in the city of Rechitsa, five drunken Red Army soldiers staged a knife fight on the street and wounded three workers, and returning to the unit, they raped a passin

I wonder what the People's Commissar meant by "ugly cases of drunkenness"? Are the examples given by him egregious or typical? And if typical, then who was more afraid of the population, enemies or defenders? **"A significant**

part of all accidents, catastrophes and all other emergencies are a direct consequence of drunkenness and an unacceptable attitude towards this evil on the part of responsible bosses and commissars.

Many cases of postponing and canceling classes and failure to fulfill the plan for combat training are also the result of the corrupting effect of

drunkenness. Finally, numerous examples show that drunkards are often made the prey of foreign intelligence services, take the path of outright treason to

the Motherland ... All these indisputable truths are well known to every thinking commander and political worker, and yet there is no real fight against drunkenness. Drunkenness is flourishing, it has become a common everyday phenomenon, they put up with it, it is not subject to public

condemnation ... "[61] However, even without vodka they loved and knew how to violate discipline. Anyone who is at least somehow interested in the history of the Red Army is well aware of the conflict between Stalin and the head of the main department of the Red Army Air Force, Lieutenant General Rychagov. Writer Konstantin Simonov, at the suggestion of its like this:

"This happened at the Military Council ... just before the war. It was about the accident rate in aviation, the accident rate was high ... These and other explanations for the accident rate were given, until the turn came to Rychagov, then commander of the air force. He was, it seems, a lieutenant general, he was generally young, and he already looked like a perfect boy in appearance. And when it was his turn, he suddenly said:

- The accident rate will be high, because you make us fly on coffins. It was

completely unexpected, he blushed, broke, there was absolute deathly silence. Only Rychagov stood, still

not moving away after his cry, purple and agitated, and a few steps away from him stood Stalin ... Everyone was

waiting for what would happen. He stood for a moment, then walked past the table, in the same direction he had gone. He reached the end, turned around, walked back the whole room in complete silence, turned again and, taking his pipe out of his mouth, said slowly and quietly, without raising his voice: "You shouldn't have said that!" And

went again. Again he reached the end, turned again, walked the whole room, turned again and stopped almost in the same place as the first time, again said in the same low calm voice: "You shouldn't have said that," and,

making a tiny pause added: "The meeting is adjourned.

And he was the first to leave the room ... And a week later, Rychagov was arrested and disappeared forever .

That is, the tyrant is angry - and there is no man. But in fact, the tyrant simply removed Rychagov from his post and sent him to study at the Military Academy of the General Staff. Considering that the head of the Soviet air force had only a flight school behind him, it is not superfluous. He was arrested only on June 24, for what - we know. But why was Stalin so angry? Yes,

because it's not about airplanes at all, and to

know this, you don't have to graduate from academies. The same Rychagov, on Soviet machines of older models, fought well in Spain, and here people are fighting during training flights. And it was not at all necessary to look for an "explanation of the accident", the reasons for it were well known long before this historic conversation. They are reflected, for example, in the order "On measures to prevent accidents in parts of the Red Army Air Force", dated June 4, 1939 - certainly not the first and not the last. **"... The number of flight accidents in 1939, especially in April and May, reached extraordinary proportions. During the period from January 1 to May 15, 34 disasters occurred, 70 people died in them. During the same period, 126 accidents occurred, in which 91 aircraft were destroyed ...**

These heavy losses ... are the direct result of: a) the criminal violation of special orders, regulations, flight manuals and instructions;

b) the extremely poor work of the command and political staff of the air forces and the military councils of the districts and armies in educating the flight and technical

personnel of air units; c) poorly organized and even worse conducted planning and consistency in the combat training of aviation units;

d) the inability of senior commanders and commissars to establish flight technical training with each crew and pilot individually in accordance with the level of their special knowledge, preparedness, their individual and specific abilities and qualities;

e) the still unsatisfactory knowledge of the material part of the personnel, as a result of this, its poor operation, and f) most importantly, the unacceptable weakening of military discipline in the units of the Air Force and laxity, unfortunately, even among the best pilots, not excluding some Heroes of the Soviet Union. Literally every catastrophe and incident serves

as confirmation of all that has been said, since with the most cursory acquaintance with them, as a rule, the cause is either indiscipline, or looseness, or an inattentive and unacceptably negligent attitude to their duties of the flight and lifting and technical staff .

Rychagov could blame the "coffins" if he had outlived everything the above disadvantages. What do you think, did he outlive them or not?

And examples, of course, are given in the order, among which is the death of the "ace number one" of the Soviet Union Valery Chkalov. No matter how many legends they made up, even to the point that Stalin wanted to make Chkalov People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (and, apparently, to send Beria to test aircraft). In fact, everything turned out to be much more prosaic. The cause of the death of the famous pilot was the well-known syndrome: "I'm the coolest!"

Chkalov was supposed to test a new fighter, not yet brought to mind, with a bunch of defects, which the pilot knew very well. Did he have the opportunity to refuse the tests, or did the beasts of the chiefs forcibly drive the brigade commander into a faulty vehicle? Not only had the opportunity, but Stalin himself, to whom the NKVD reported on

happening, personally banned the test. And what do you think Comrade Chkalov did? Not only flew out to test the unfinished aircraft, but also went outside the airfield. The plane, as expected, broke down, there was no even place nearby, and during a forced landing, the devil knows where the pilot died. Well, and who made him "fly on coffins"?

Here is another story that perfectly characterizes the situation in the Soviet Air Force. On October 4, 1938, the Rodina plane crashed in the Amur taiga, on which the female crew, led by the famous Valentina Grizodubova, made a record flight from Moscow to the Far East. The story of the flight itself is also impressive. The first model of the aircraft fell apart in the air, the second almost fell apart, the third seemed to have flown, and on this occasion they joyfully rushed across the country. Surprisingly, the plane flew - that's just where? During the flight, maps were "blown out" from the cockpit into the hatch opened by one of the participants, so we had to follow the compass further; there was not enough gasoline to reach the final destination; the pilots were unable to call for help by radio, as they forgot to put spare batteries and were given the call signs of the previous month. When the gas ran out, the girls managed to land the plane in some kind of swamp, after which the epic began to search for them. Searched for nine days. The commander of a seaplane found "Motherland" flying these places in all directions. And then the actions of the authorities began - it would be better if they drank vodka in the offices,

honestly ... The commander of the air forces of the 2nd Separate Red Banner Army, Sorokin, went on a heavy bomber TB-3 to the landing site of Rodina, as suggested in the order, "obviously, with the only purpose, so that later it could be said that he, Sorokin, also took part in the rescue of the Rodina crew. At the same time, on the "Douglas" of the army

commander Konev (by the way, taken without demand), the famous test pilot brigade commander Bryandinskiy, who was also not sent there, flew.

The seaplane commander Mikhail Sakharov recalls (who, actually, and found the girls):

"Having decided to fly to the landing site of Rodina, the commander Sorokin ordered me to fly on his TB-3 as a navigator. But I always

shunned noisy and naughty chiefs and explained to the divisional commander that I already had a task from

my superiors ... I remember a strange detail before the flight. Flag navigator of the Air Force A. Bryandinsky, to whom I wanted to show how best and with greater accuracy to get out at the place of the forced landing of the Rodina plane, waved me away in a rather sharp form. He drew a circle on his map with a red pencil and put a cross on it. One of those who watched this scene gloomily joked that no matter how this cross turned out to be oak ... "[64]

And so it happened. Both the self-confident tester and the divisional commander could not get out exactly to the landing site of the Motherland. Busy searching, they circled over the forest until they collided. The result is 15 corpses.

Here the "Stalinist coffins" have absolutely nothing to do with it!

Well, to complete the picture - a little about the headquarters. Marshal Shaposhnikov called the headquarters "the brain of the army." Chaos also reigned in the brains of the Red Army, and sometimes with cockroaches. The order "On improving the work of headquarters" dated July 19, 1939 paints a clinical picture in its own way:

"Preparation and work of military and operational headquarters continue to be exceptionally low.

The command, as a rule, does not know the staff service itself, does not train its staffs, does not direct their work and cannot control it.

The chiefs of staff really organize the work of the headquarters and manage it, and especially in conditions close to combat, do not know how.

Headquarters as command and control bodies are not prepared, they do not know how to organize a battle, they cannot cope with the work of commanding troops during a battle.

The performers of their duties do not know, they do not have the necessary staff skills, they are not trained to work in complicated conditions ...

Headquarters do not directly control the actions of the troops, check and study the received reports, as a result - their ignorance of the true situation and condition of the troops,

and often false information from the command and higher

headquarters ... The headquarters do not know how to organize and ensure command and control of troops in battle with reliable, strong communications. Radio - the most reliable means of communication - is not used in battle even if other means of communication fail and, as a rule, is in Reports and summaries are implausible, contradictory, and sometimes false...

Submission of summaries, reports and answers to requests is untimely, and many repeated reminders and orders are required to receive them. Documents after they are made by the executor and the persons signing them are not checked, hence the constant inaccuracies and distortions.

Control over the timely and correct transfer of documents and the headquarters are not concerned with receiving them by addressees... "[65]

The order says a lot more, but it is not necessary to give everything. What has already been said is enough to explain the reasons for the defeat of the forty-first year. However,

peacetime turned out to be unsafe. In August 1939, one of the armies, through the efforts of its headquarters, almost started its own war. The chief of staff of the

AON-2 army, brigade commander Kotelnikov, decided to diversify the holding of staff games and instead of conditional names (like "blue" and "green") he used the names of real states, settlements, etc., and also gave the modern political situation in the introductory. So to say, I decided to train in conditions as close to reality as possible.

The head of the 1st (operational) department also decided to practice - checking the directive, he supplemented it with specific instructions to the units and signed the members of the Military Council of the army, so that it was quite similar. The head of the

encryption department decided to train signalmen. To this end, without warning the command, he sent out a directive to the units. At the same time, the heading "educational" was lost somewhere from the text. The headquarters of one of the air brigades had already begun to

mission, and only by chance did the pilots learn that this was still a game, not a war.

And the war was just around the corner. The first of the conflicts that foreshadowed a major war happened in 1938 - and showed that the state of the Red Army, to put it mildly, is sad. These are the events on Lake Khasan, which showed the activities of Marshal Blucher in a very special light. In

1932, the Japanese finally occupied Manchuria, a region of China bordering the Soviet Union. The puppet state of Manchukuo was created there, in which the Japanese imperial army comfortably settled down, and the Soviet-Chinese border, in fact, became the Soviet-Japanese one. And immediately the incidents began. From 1936 to July 1938, there were 231 border violations, of which 35 were accompanied by serious fighting. Moreover, in the first half of 1938, there were 124 violations on land and 40 in the air. It was clear that the Japanese were preparing something.

In July 1938, the Manchukuo government put forward territorial claims against the USSR. It claimed a small piece of land that separated Lake Khasan from the state border and, by and large, does not play a special role in big politics. It was a frank "test for lice" - how would the Soviet leadership behave? And the Soviet leadership, which was preparing for a big war, really needed to test the Red Army at least in some kind of clash, and it's not like throwing hills around. After all, Stalin said: "We don't want someone else's land, but we won't give a single piece of our land to anyone."

On July 29, an armed Soviet-Japanese showdown began. But even before that, the commander of the Far Eastern Army, the last "great strategist" and "victim of the regime," Marshal Blucher, behaved very

strangely. How long have historians racked their brains: why did the tyrant change his attitude towards the famous commander? Until then, he went to Stalin's favorites.

In 1935, Blucher, the only commander of the districts, was at the personal suggestion of Stalin awarded the rank of marshal.

The leader also defended him at the famous military council on June 2, 1937:
"... And now the campaign begins, a very serious campaign. They want to remove Blyukher... Gamarnik is leading the campaign, Aronshtam is leading... Why, I ask, explain what's the matter? Here he is drinking. OK then. Well, what else? Here he does not get up early in the morning, does not go to the troops. What else? Outdated, does not understand new methods of work. Well, today he does not understand, tomorrow he will understand, the experience of the old fighter does not disappear ... When he arrives, we see him. The man is like

a man, not a bad one ... " True, the district of this " good man " was in a terrible state. In order not to go far, we will use the same book by Suvorov "Purification". He cites the recollection of Colonel Grigorenko, who in 1941 served as an officer in the operations department of the headquarters of the Far Eastern Front. In January 1941, General of the Army Apanasenko was appointed the new commander of the front. And this is what was found out at the very first report of the operational management:

"We started with a cover plan. I reported because I was responsible for this part of the operational plan. Kazakovtsev (the new head of the operational department. - E.P.) stood nearby. As the report progressed, Apanasenko made separate remarks and made judgments. When I began to report on the disposition of the front reserves, Apanasenko said:

- Right! From here it is most convenient to maneuver. There will be a threat here, we have our reserves here, - and he waved his hand to the south. - And it will be created here, we will maneuver here, - he moved his hand to the west.

Kazakovtsev, who was silent when Apanasenko's hand moved towards south, now calmly, as if about something insignificant, said: -

We will maneuver if the Japanese allow it. -

Like this? Apanasenko was wary. — And so.

This railway has 52 small tunnels and large bridge. It's worth blowing up at least one, and we won't take anything anywhere. Let's switch to vehicles. We will maneuver on the ground. - Will not work. There is no primer parallel to the railroad.

Apanasenko had a red stripe above his collar, which quickly crept up. With a red face, with bloodshot eyes, he barked:

- How so! They shouted: the Far East is a fortress! Further East is locked! But it turns out that we are sitting here, as if in a mousetrap!

- He ran to the phone, picked up the receiver: - Prayer to me immediately!

A few minutes later, an alarmed boss ran in. engineers of the front, Lieutenant General of the Engineering Troops Molev.

- Molev! Do you know that there is no highway from Khabarovsk to Kuibyshevka? —

Known. - So

why are you silent? Or do you think that the Japanese will build you! In short, a month for preparation, four months for construction ... " However, the lack of a primer parallel to the railway

the matter was not limited. Everything was more fun.

"When he took command, the road network, especially in Primorye, was already relatively developed. But the units were not deployed on the roads. And the access roads were not marked. Therefore, it was possible to get into many parts of the mud only on horseback. Apanasenko drove the passenger car into the very dirt of the access roads, threw it there, and left for another, declaring publicly: "I don't drive to such slobbs." Then he called the commander of the unit to himself. Rumors of harsh reprimands, dismissals and demotions quickly spread piecemeal. Everyone dropped everything and started building access roads. For a month, excellent highways led to all the towns, and the towns themselves - streets, technical parks, utility yards - were engraved, and in some places even asphalted.

The missing highway was built in four months, access roads - in general, in a month. And here is the question: what did Marshal Blucher, Stalin's favorite, do for seventeen years in the Far East? And this is just one example. You can talk about

the dugouts in which the military lived, and about the training of fighters, and about much more. However, this man also considered himself a great statesman. In June 1938, he fled to the Japanese, fleeing arrest, head of the UNKVD of the Far Eastern Territory

Lyushkov. He told the Japanese counterintelligence officers the following about Blucher:

"Blucher loves power very much. He is not satisfied with the role he plays in the Far East, he wants more. He considers himself superior to Voroshilov. It is politically doubtful that he is satisfied with the overall situation, although he is very cautious. In the army, he is more popular than Voroshilov. Blucher does not like military commissars and military councils, which limit his right to give orders. In general, another Tukhachevsky,

he only drinks more and does not play the violin. Fortunately, after the start of

the conflict on the lake, Hassan Blucher behaved so strangely that he attracted special attention. The Military Council of the Red Army defined his behavior as "a combination of duplicity, indiscipline and sabotage of an armed rebuff to Japanese troops." What did he do that even Stalin stopped defending him? As soon as the situation escalated, Blucher, instead of raising troops ...

questioned the legality of the actions of the border guards near Lake Khasan. The question is: what does he care about this? The border guards had their own bosses, they belonged to the NKVD, and the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs was subordinate to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and not the People's Commissar of Defense. But, apparently, by that time the marshal had entered the role of the "master" of the Far East. He, without notifying either the representatives of the People's Commissariat of Defense, who were at that time in Khabarovsk, or even his own chief of staff, sent a commission to investigate the actions of the border guards. The commission came to the conclusion that the border on our side was violated by as much as three meters and, therefore, we are to blame for the conflict. After that, Blucher sent a telegram to the people's commissar, in which he demanded the arrest of the head of the border station. Voroshilov, a little stunned by such a turn, sent him to a well-known address, offering to "stop fussing with all sorts of commissions and accurately carry out the decisions of the Soviet government and the orders of the people's commissar." And who's to say he was wrong?

Then the marshal either took offense at Moscow, which did not appreciate his efforts, or finally fell into a heavy binge - and most of all, his actions look like outright sabotage. Blucher sent his

chief of staff to the front, however, forgetting to give him specific orders and powers, and he himself generally removed himself from the leadership of hostilities. Only when he was literally kicked out to the front line did he take up operational leadership. Already after the conflict, on September 4, 1938, having considered the actions of the marshal, the Military Council noted:

“With this more than strange leadership, he does not set clear tasks for the troops to destroy the enemy, interferes with the combat work of commanders subordinate to him, in particular, the command of the 1st Army is actually removed from command of its troops without any reason; disrupts the work of the front-line administration and slows down the defeat of the Japanese troops stationed on our territory ... Having left for the scene, he evades in every possible way from establishing continuous communication with Moscow, despite the endless calls to him by direct wire by the People's Commissar of Defense. For three whole days, with a normally working telegraph connection, it was impossible to get a

conversation with Comrade Blucher. All this operational "activity" of Marshal Blucher was completed by the return to them on 10.08. the order to conscript 12 ages into the 1st Army ... This order of Comrade Blucher provoked the Japanese to announce their mobilization to them and could —

draw us into a big war with Japan ”[66] . As a result of the hostilities, Marshal Blucher was removed from his post - and who will say that it is undeserved? But here is the question: what was the Soviet leadership supposed to think after the “Tukhachevsky case”? That's right, exactly like this: "Have we cleared all the conspirators from the army?" The NKVD began to dig, and on October 22 the marshal was arrested. On November 9, 1938, he died in the inner prison of the NKVD from a thrombosis. According to some sources, Blucher did not confess to anything, according to others, he confessed to everything and “mortgaged” even his first wives and children. But the case was clearly very serious, because on March 10, 1939, already dead, he was stripped of the rank of marshal and sentenced to death "for spying for Japan, participating in an anti-Soviet organization of the right and in a military conspiracy." But in the Soviet Union it was not customary to

Chapter

10 But tomorrow the war!

But let's get back to the conflict at Lake Khasan, the first test of the Red Army's combat effectiveness. The showdown with the Japanese continued until August 11 and ended with the victory of the Soviet side, so that several disputed hills remained with us. Then the holiday thundered, joyful newspaper articles, the film "Tractor Drivers", etc. The country triumphed loudly, especially since half of the population had the shameful Russian-Japanese war in their memory, and the second half did not find it, but heard a lot.

In the People's Commissariat of Defense, the situation was much less festive. And no wonder: the words of Stalin, which he said on another occasion in 1923, are quite applicable to this small incident: "If God had not helped us and we had to get involved in the war, we would have been fluffed to smithereens." After all, the Japanese have already had to beat the Russian army, so why not repeat it?

In April 1939, the members of the Military Council of the 1st Primorsky Army were tried. In the dock were the commander of the army division commander Podlas, a member of the Military Council, Brigadier Commissar Shulikov, and the chief of staff, Colonel Pomoshchnikov. No "politics" - they were tried solely for transcendent gouging. For example, this is how the army command put the units

entrusted to it on alert. Having given the order, the Military Council forgot to notify the chiefs of army departments about it, who found out about the alarm (if they found out) after the start of the movement of troops. You can imagine if the head of, say, the communications department learns that the army has gone on the march from the corps communications chief - how this affects communications. What about supply chains or doctors?

Then the military managed to "lose" the border guards with two rifle battalions attached to them - they fought on their own, no one was interested in their actions. But these were only flowers, but the berries began when the army moved to the border.

From the verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. April 22, 1939 "... The units and subunits sent to the combat area were not staffed to their full strength, and the rifle companies went into battle with a large shortage of fighters, while a significant number of Red Army soldiers were in various kinds of household unimportant work ..."

Here is the answer to the previously asked question - what did the Red Army soldiers do, if they were not even taught to shoot. By the way, back in May, seeing where things were going, the command forbade diverting the Red Army men to extraneous work. Do you think this order was carried out? And now it was necessary, already in fact in battle, from the existing scraps to somehow sew new parts together. The mess with the personnel was complemented by the mess in all

other areas. ***"The units sent to the combat area were not provided with all the necessary weapons, and in a number of cases artillery batteries ended up at the front without shells, spare barrels for machine guns were not fitted in advance, rifles were issued unshot, and some fighters arrived in the combat area without any rifles and gas masks."***

Having sufficient time, means and forces, Podlas and Pomoshchikov did not take all the necessary measures to bring the main road into a passable state and did not ensure the organization of the normal movement of troops along the roads. The corresponding instruction to Voendor was given only six days after the troops moved into the combat area. As a result of this, huge traffic jams were created on the roads, people and materiel got stuck in a swamp, units were knocked out of the march schedule, which sharply reduced the combat mobility and maneuverability of a

The deployment of logistic institutions took place unplanned and unorganized, and the field supply department began to work only on August 10, that is, by the end of the operation. Despite the huge stocks of clothing, many fighters were sent into battle in completely worn out shoes and without overcoats. In a number of units there were no knapsack stocks of canned food ... The sanitary rear was also not prepared in a timely manner, and hundreds of the wounded

in Posyet, where until August 7 there was neither an army hospital, nor a sufficient number of doctors ... Pomoshnikov did not take due measures to timely provide units with suitable cards ... "[67] . As a result, having—

an absolute superiority in forces - 23 thousand people, 285 tanks and 250 aircraft against 7 thousand Japanese without tanks and aircraft - ours lost twice as much: 960 people were killed and about 2750 were wounded against 500 killed and 900 wounded by the enemy. The disputed Bezmyannaya and Zaozernaya hills were not taken to the end, the Japanese left after the ceasefire.

However, the unfortunate commanders got off surprisingly easily. Shulikov and Pomoshchikov received two and three years of probation, Podlas - five years. Khrushchev mentioned him in his report in the list of repressed military leaders - however, it did not come to rehabilitation. They were embarrassed, presumably: there were still too many people who remembered these events.

However, the former commander did not have to sit. Immediately after the verdict, he was amnestied, in August 1940 he was reinstated in the army and appointed deputy commander of the Kyiv Special Military District. Judging by the fact that already during the war, Podlas was promoted, the scandal had an effect on him, he fought with dignity and died in May 1942. Then there was Khalkin-

Gol, the "toy" Polish campaign, the Finnish war. And each of them revealed more and more shortcomings in the condition of the Red Army. The results of the Finnish war, where ours faced a albeit small, but real regular army, were such that Voroshilov was either removed or he himself resigned. This should have been done earlier - after all, it is better if the army is prepared for war by a combat general - but in the absence of serious wars there were no real combat generals. Now the "winner of the Finns" Tymoshenko has appeared - he was handed the People's Commissariat for further preparations for the war. It must be assumed that the reason for the appointment of General Zhukov as Chief of the General Staff is exactly the same: Zhukov was no staff officer, but a strong administrator and was an excellent candidate for tightening the screws.

However, the removal from office can in no way be considered repression in relation to Voroshilov - he became deputy

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for Military Affairs. It was Voroshilov, and not Zhukov and not Timoshenko, who subsequently entered the State Defense Committee. Other members of the military elite - and Timoshenko, and Meretskov, and Zhukov - after the start of the war went downhill. Apparently, they were supposed to perform specific functions, in which, after the start of the war, the need disappeared. What these functions could be can be seen from the "Act on the reception of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR S. K. Timoshenko from K. E. Voroshilov", signed on December 7, 1940 - the army check lasted seven months! Compared with the orders of 1938-1939, a fair amount of progress is visible - at least the act does not say that soldiers and commanders do not know how to shoot and dig in. Yet there is little joy.

"Organization and structure of the central

office...2. The main charters - field service, internal service, disciplinary and some combat charters of the armed forces are outdated and require radical revision. There are no instructions for driving large military formations (armies), instructions for attacking and defending fortified areas, instructions for the actions of troops in the mountains ... 5. The control over the execution of the given orders and decisions of

the government was not sufficiently organized. There was no live effective leadership in the training of troops. On-site verification as a system was not carried out and was replaced by receipt of paper

reports".

This is all the same charming quality that Archpriest Georgy Shavel'sky noted even in the Russian imperial army (however, it will be observed in any army that is not constantly being bullied in this part): "I can't hide one shortcoming of ***our army,***

which could not but respond sad on her actions and successes. In the Russo-Japanese War, this shortcoming was called "something". It consisted in the fact that not only our soldier, but also the officer - including the highest commanders - were not accustomed to the absolute accuracy of the execution of orders and orders, as well as to the absolute accuracy of reports ...

In 1916, once Gen. M. V. Alekseev poured out his grief before me:

- Well, how to fight here? When Hindenburg gives an order, he knows that his order will be exactly carried out not only by the commander, but by every non-commissioned officer. I'm never sure that even the commanders of the armies will carry out my orders. What is being done at the front - I never know for sure, because all successes are exaggerated, and failures are either reduced or completely hidden."

In general, there are two main Russian shortcomings in full growth: "somehow" and "somehow". But as the document is read, it turns out that the entire Red Army, from the General Staff to each company, has become overgrown with this weed.

"Operational preparation 1.

By the time the People's Commissariat of Defense received and handed over an operational plan for the war, there were no operational plans, both general and private.

The General Staff has no data on the state of border cover. The decisions of the military councils of the districts, armies and the front on this issue are unknown to the General

Staff. By the way, by the beginning of the war, this was more or less dealt with. So it was not in vain that they put on the People's Commissariat and the General Staff not "strategists", but front-line generals with good fists.

"2. Management of the operational training of senior officers and staffs was expressed only in planning it and issuing directives. Since 1938, the People's Commissar of Defense and the General Staff have not carried out classes with senior officers and staffs. There was almost no control over operational training in the districts. The People's Commissariat of Defense is lagging behind in the development of questions of the operational use of troops in modern warfare. 3.

The preparation of theaters of operations for war is in all respects extremely weak ... a) VOSO did

not show due maneuverability in the use of available railway facilities for military transportation. There is no regulation on the management of railways in the

theater of war, which clearly defines the functions of the NKPS bodies and the VOSO bodies, as well as the order of transportation ...[\[68\]](#)

c) the construction of communications along the line of the NKS is far behind, and along the line of the NPO in 1940

it was completely disrupted ... e) there is no clear and precise plan for the preparation of theaters in engineering terms, arising from the operational plan. The main milestones and the entire system of engineering training are not defined

g) in terms of topography, the theaters of military operations are far from adequately prepared, and the need for troops in maps is not met. Any of these points

could be the nail that caused the horseshoe to disappear. Yes, why go far - here's an example for you, how one word in a document in army conditions, if this story happened not on the Japanese, but on the German front, could lead to disastrous consequences.

It happened in the summer of 1939, during the armed conflict on the Khalkin-Gol River, when military supplies began to be transferred to the combat area. They were taken first along the Trans-Siberian Railway to Chita, and then along the railway line to the Solovyovskaya station. The branch was weak, but the traffic jam that grew along the Trans-Siberian Railway surpassed all understanding: more than 2,000 kilometers, to Krasnoyarsk itself. The People's Commissariat of Railways sent the Deputy People's Commissar of Railways German Kovalev, who in 1941 became head of the Department of Military Communications, to clear the traffic jam. He later recalled:

“The reason turned out to be primitive to implausibility. It turns out that the Directorate of Military Communications of the General Staff issued outfits to all the chiefs of echelons indicating the unloading station: “Solovievskaya”. There are hundreds of echelons, and there are only two unloading tracks on Solovyovskaya, and even those without high platforms ...

I ask Gundobin[69]: “Have you tried to unload at other stations of the Olovyaninsky department?”

“I tried to persuade the heads of the echelons,” he said. - They answer us that we are not from the Pooh-Perov artel. We have an order to unload at Solovyovskaya, and we will carry it out, no matter what it takes. worth it.”

Can you imagine the consequences if something like this happened? 1941? But, it would seem, one word, the smallest trifle ...

But let's continue reading the act:

"The staffing and organization of troops

1. The People's Commissariat does not have a precisely established actual number of the Red Army at the time of admission. Due to the fault of the Main Directorate of the Red Army, the accounting of personnel is in an extremely neglected state ... 4.

Regarding the organization of troops - there are no provisions on the management of units (regiments), formations (divisions and brigades) ... Regulations on field command and control of troops have not been dev

Mobilization preparation 1. In connection with the war and significant redeployment of troops, the mobilization plan was violated. The People's Commissariat of Defense does not have a new mobilization plan. Measures for mobilization by administrative order have not been completed by the development ...

The state of personnel By the time the People's Commissariat of Defense was accepted, the army had a significant shortage of command personnel, especially in the infantry, reaching 21% of the regular strength on May 1, 1940 ...

The quality of command staff training is low, especially at the platoon-company level, in which up to 68% have only a short-term 6-month training course for junior lieutenant. The

training of commanders in military schools is unsatisfactory ... The disadvantages of the training programs for commanders in military educational institutions are: conducting classes mainly in the classroom, insufficiency of field studies, saturation of programs with general subjects to the detriment of

military...

The accounting of command personnel is unsatisfactory and does not reflect command personnel with combat experience. Candidate lists are missing... Norms for the

replenishment of commanders for wartime have not been developed...

There was no plan for the preparation and replenishment of reserve commanders for the full mobilization of the army in wartime.

combat training of troops

composition;

2) poor tactical training in all types of combat and reconnaissance, especially small divisions;

3) unsatisfactory practical field training and inability to do what is required in a combat situation.

4) the extremely weak training of the military branches in

interaction on the battlefield ... 5) the

troops are not trained in skiing; 6) the use

of camouflage is poorly developed; 7) fire

control has not been worked out in the troops; 8) the troops

are not trained in attacking fortified areas, building

and overcoming obstacles and forcing rivers ... "[70] Then

there are the same devastating reports on the types of troops. The only oasis here is the cavalry, only its training is recognized as satisfactory.

As they say, honor and glory to Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny! And the rest?

What happened in the end can be illustrated by the example of the Kyiv Special Military District. To do this, we use the book of the military historian Ruslan Irinarkhov "Kiev Special", where the state of this district is carefully analyzed.

Take, for example, the beauty and pride of the Red Army - the tank troops. By June 1941, the Soviet Union had 25,000 tanks. Not a single country in the world, even the most militant, had anything like it. Nazi Germany had 3,712 tanks in its invading army (together with its allies, a little more than 5,000) - and this, by the way, was the most powerful army in the world at that time. The tank program is the brainchild of

Marshal Tukhachevsky, who in 1931 became the chief of armaments of the Red Army, it was he who diligently "warmed up" it. At the same time, at the suggestion of the head of the ABTU of the Red Army, Khalepsky (also a "victim of the regime"), he made one of the two main bets on

tank T-26. This miracle of technology was made on the basis of the English Vickers Mk.E tank, also known as the Vickers 6-ton. The combination of bulletproof armor and low speed made it unsuitable for combat use, but very convenient for extermination along with the crew. The British army rejected this model, and pragmatic hard to offer unusable goods for export. And fools, as usual, were found. Two countries began to produce this tank at home: the USSR and Poland, but on a different scale. The Poles produced 150 pieces, ours riveted 10 thousand. Approximately the same number of BT tanks were produced, decent enough, but by the beginning of the war they were outdated. These tanks did not bring victory to the Red Army - almost the entire fleet remained on the battlefields in the first two months of the war, 15–20% of the vehicles located in the border districts survived.

There were 5894 units of armored vehicles in Kiev Special [71] . Among them, there were 278 and 496 new KV and T-34 vehicles suitable for modern warfare, respectively (almost the same as the total number of enemy tanks opposing KOVO). The basis of the park was BT (1819 units) and T-26 (1698 units). The remaining one and a half thousand reflected the difficult path of Soviet tank building. There were 394 T-27 wedges with 10 mm armor and one machine gun, 652 amphibious T-37s, T-38s and T-40s - the same wedges, only they float on water. The picture was completed by 215 three-tower T-28s and 51 five-tower T-35 monsters (another hello from comrade Tukhachevsky) and a certain number of armored units for special purposes (self-propelled guns, sapper tanks, etc.) (However, it cannot be said that super-modern armadas attacked the Red Army, Among the approximately 900 tanks that the Germans had against the troops of the KOVO were: 115 Pz.I - in fact tankettes with armor up to 13 mm, armed with two machine guns; 211 light Pz. II, 355 Pz. III, 100 Pz IV, 84 Stug III self-propelled guns (all medium) and 30 captured French B-1s, which could be considered heavy with some stretch [72].)

As we know, the sixfold superiority in tanks did not help the troops of the Kyiv Special at all (as well as superiority in the number of aircraft and approximate parity in numbers

artillery barrels). The point is not only in the number of weapons, but also in how they are used.

Ruslan Irinarkhov writes: "The armored forces of the KOVO had a significant amount of military equipment ... and, provided it was used competently in cooperation with other branches and types of troops of the district, they could offer serious resistance to the enemy." So this OK "provided"! And how is it, this condition, observed?

Let's start with personnel, which, as you know, "decide everything." There was just a problem with the staff - both in quantity and quality. We already wrote about the level of education of conscripts - four classes. With the command staff, the situation was even worse - it simply did not exist. As of June 1941, the district troops lacked about 30 thousand command and technical personnel. In the tank troops, it looked like this: **"The**

9th, 19th and 22nd mechanized corps had a shortage of commanders and sergeants of about 40–50% ... The 35th tank division had only 3 commanders of tank battalions (8 in the state), 13 commanders of tank companies (24 in the state). The 215th Motorized Division lacked 5 battalion commanders and 13 company commanders. The tank regiment and the reconnaissance battalion of this division were only 31% complete with junior commanding staff ... In the 37th Panzer Division, the staffing was: command commanding staff - 41.2%, junior commanding staff - 48.3%. The rank and file of the 37th Panzer Division was 60%

recruits from the May 1941 draft, who were completely untrained and had not completed the training course for a young soldier. The situation was the same in the motorcycle regiment of the 15th mechanized corps. The situation was especially bad with the training of driver mechanics ...

Many headquarters of mechanized corps, formations and regiments were not fully staffed with command personnel. So, in the 15th, 16th, 19th and 22nd mechanized corps, operational and intelligence departments are not staffed. In the 19th Panzer Division, the headquarters of the regiments consisted only of the chiefs of staff and the chiefs of the third units ... "[73]

The shortage of commanders was harmoniously complemented by a shortage of equipment, weapons, etc. Let's take the 32nd Panzer Division as an example. Its staffing with combat materiel, i.e. tanks, was 83% - very good for those times. However, it was only 22% equipped with wheeled vehicles, that is, trucks and tankers, 13% with repair equipment, and only 2% with spare parts. And what is a tank division without a rembat?

There is such a thing: engine life - the number of hours that a tank engine can work without major repairs. Among our tanks, the T-26 produced in the mid-30s had the maximum engine life - about 250 hours. The rest have less. After the resource was exhausted, the engine needed a major overhaul. We already know the availability of repair equipment, but not of working repairmen, but the shortage of skilled workers in the USSR was much greater than the shortage of tenth graders suitable for officer courses. By the way, that is why, and not out of sabotage, the General Staff did not allow combat training of crews on new vehicles. The first "thirty-fours" motor resource was only 50 hours. And what are you supposed to do? To teach tankers - you will be left without tanks, not to teach tankers - you will find yourself without tank troops ...

With weapons, too, was not all right. In the tank units of the 9th, 19th, 22nd mechanized corps, about 50% of light machine guns and 40% of machine guns were missing. In the motorized rifle regiment of the 37th Panzer Division, 600 people had no weapons at all. There were not enough anti-aircraft guns and shells for them, vehicles for transporting shells, tractors for transporting guns. The tanks had a small motor resource and were badly worn out. About 300 cars were waiting for their turn at the repair bases of

the district. How long do you think such tank troops will last even if they are not against the most powerful army in the world? In the best case, before the development of a motor resource ...

With artillery, things were about the same: a large number of guns, mortars, enough shells, but: ***“the weak point of artillery ... was to provide its units with means***

mechanical traction ... The district troops lacked 2500 tractors, 8750 cars, 4800 motorcycles, 3600 trailers ... "[74] —

As for aviation, here the picture was sad in its own way. In terms of the number of aircraft, our aviation was many times superior to the German one, and the pilots were trained. However, when it came to dominance in the sky, completely different factors played their role. ***"The connection between the district air force***

headquarters and air divisions and divisions with airfields was maintained mainly by wire, there were very few radio stations in the units (but what about the connection of machines with the airfield and with each other? - ***E.P.***). ***The issues of masking airfields and aircraft located there were not resolved. These activities in the district began only on June 21, 1941 and were reduced to the dispersal of aircraft by squadron in different places of airfields. The organization of air defense of airfields was in a neglected state, which was explained***

not only by the lack of necessary camouflage equipment and the lack of air defense equipment, but also by insufficient attention from the command of regiments, divisions, and the district air force ... To this we can add that by June 22, 1941 43% commanders of all levels of the KOVO Air Force were in their positions

for less than six months, 55% - less than a year, over 91% of the commanders of air formations were in their positions for less than 6 months, which undoubtedly affected the leadership of aviation units during the hostilities that began soon "[75] .

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And here is another story of the saddest in the world - about the connection. The People's Commissariat of Communications in the USSR had no luck at all. From 1932 to 1936, the former chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Rykov worked there, a lawyer by education and a revolutionary by biography, but not a signalman. Then, in the People's Commissariat's office, a series of "siloviki" were removed from their posts - the former People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Yagoda, the former chief of armaments of the Red Army Khalepsky (by the way, it was he who recommended buying the six-ton Vickers for production in the USSR), the former head of the Gulag Berman. And only in 1939 did a specialist appear in the main chair of the People's Commissariat - the military signalman Peresyphkin, but time was already hopelessly lost. The result of these personnel games

the backlog of connected business in the Soviet Union and, as a result, the backlog of army

communications. ***“The communications of the district headquarters, armies, formations and units of the KOVO were based mainly on permanent telephone and telegraph lines of the People's Commissariat of Communications of the —***

USSR, which did not ensure complete secrecy of the negotiations”[76]. This is first. And secondly, on the eve of the war, hundreds of German saboteurs went across the border to cut wires, so that the Soviet troops quickly found themselves with almost no wired communications. It remained to rely only on the walkie-

talkie. But parts of the district were equipped with them, at best, by 50-60%. ***“So, in two radio stations instead of the eight required by the state.***

A small number of radio stations ... that were in service with mechanized corps were low-power, shortwave. For example, the range of 5AK did not exceed 25 km, and then when working on the spot. The mechanized corps had a small number of radio-equipped tanks (! - E.P.), but they were distributed unevenly between units ... ”[77]

Naturally, all other shortcomings —

transmission," also did not go anywhere.

And now tell me: knowing all of the above, do you still have questions why everything turned out the way it did? Personally, I have a completely different question: how did we manage to win? But that's a completely different story.

Conclusion

And now, knowing what we already know, let's talk about the summer of 1941. Was the debut of the war, for all its tragedy, unsuccessful for the

Soviet Union? For some reason, the German attack on the USSR is considered a gamble. Something incomprehensible happened to Hitler: until then he had been a sober and cautious politician, and suddenly, headlong, embarked on a completely insane enterprise. But was it as crazy as it seems now? Maybe we are missing something?

In his previous "adventures" the Fuhrer acted unerringly - and brilliantly. Each time, the army command almost fought in hysterics: both when he sent troops into the demilitarized Rhine zone, and when he took Czechoslovakia region after region, and before joining Austria. However, Hitler got away with everything. Then military victories began, and the generals stopped resisting the head of state. The Polish army was actually defeated in a week, and the last pockets of resistance were eliminated by the end of September. The French army, the strongest in Europe, was defeated by the Wehrmacht in 45 days. Could Hitler,

having such an army, count on a quick victory over the Red Army? Why not? The Wehrmacht had the highest culture of warfare, it was headed by hereditary Prussian officers. The Germans did not take it by brute force, but primarily by their phenomenal organization, the interaction of troops, and tactical finds. Against any force, they put up skill - and won, in strict accordance with the words of Suvorov: "Beat not with numbers, but with skill." Therefore, despite the number of tanks, aircraft, etc., **in the complex**, the German army was much superior to ours. Could Hitler be unaware of this? Funny question. From the beginning of the 1920s until

1933, the Red Army and the German Reichswehr were closely connected. Officers went to each other for maneuvers, our commanders studied at German academies. After Hitler came to power, contacts went into the depths, became implicit,

informal, but still continued - at least Tukhachevsky's group maintained contact with their German colleagues. And even if these ties ceased in 1937, is it possible to perform a miracle in four years? Hitler had every reason to think that the Red Army would collapse under the blows of the Wehrmacht very quickly. Especially if General Pavlov performed his art not on his own, but in close contact with "German friends." Of course, Hitler, if he did not know for sure, should have

assumed that Stalin would try to bring the army into at least some order. It seemed impossible - but the Russians by that time had already got their hands on the implementation of impossible things. Speaking at a secret military meeting on January 9, 1940, Hitler said: "Although the Russian armed forces are a clay colossus without a head, it is impossible to foresee their further development. Since Russia must be defeated in any case, it is better to do it now, when the Russian army is devoid of leaders and poorly trained ... "Then, by the way, he said: "Nevertheless, even now one cannot underestimate the Russians ... "

The only reason why the Barbarossa plan is considered adventurous is the vastness of the country that was to be conquered. It was impossible to occupy it purely physically, just as it was impossible to destroy the entire Red Army with the first strike - simply because not all of it was located within the reach of the first strike. And after the first six to eight weeks of the war, mobilization will also begin to send new forces to the front. In terms of human resources, Germany was no match for Russia. And, no matter how far the Germans reached, they were still waiting for revenge, albeit not very well-trained, but colossal in number of the army.

However, all this did not bother Hitler in the least - and, we repeat, he was by no means an adventurer. Indeed, his war plan was simple and infallible, and ensured victory for Germany in just the five months during which the Führer planned to end the war. Why? Because the huge and mighty Soviet Union had one weak spot, an Achilles' heel that made our country extremely vulnerable. And this is not the state of the army ...

... General Hans von Seeckt, who commanded the Reichswehr [78] in the 20s years, as befits a commander, he played through various variants of wars, including conducting operational-strategic games, simulating a war with the USSR. The same was done somewhat later by the commander of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal von Blomberg. In 1937, our intelligence obtained data on these games and put them on Stalin's table. Here is what Pavel Sudoplatov writes about this: ***“After the operational-strategic***

games conducted by von Seeckt and then Blomberg, a “testament of Seeckt” appeared, which said that Germany would not be able to win the war with Russia if the hostilities dragged on for more than two months and if during the first month of the war it is not possible to capture Leningrad, Kiev, Moscow and defeat the main forces of the Red Army, simultaneously occupying the main centers of the military industry and the extraction of raw materials in the European part of the USSR. How did Stalin react to this information? Let us continue to quote Sudoplatov: ***“Although Stalin was irritated with intelligence materials, at the***

same time he sought to use them ... to bring information to the German military circles about the

inevitability for Germany of a long war with Russia. The emphasis was on the fact that we created a military-industrial base in the Urals, invulnerable to German attack. Moscow, Leningrad and Kyiv were needed by the Germans not only as large cities, industrial centers and railway junctions. The Barbarossa plan provided for the creation of several states on the occupied territory, with which Germany was going to conclude peace

treaties, thus creating a buffer zone between itself and the rest of the USSR. But these are tasks of the second order. Stalin immediately grasped the essence, singling out the only real threat in the “testament of Seeckt”.

Indeed, if you abandon the logic of divisions and corps and think about where gasoline and cartridges come from, it is immediately clear that Hitler could have won this war, and even without much difficulty. The Soviet Union, generally invincible, had one fatal feature. Much of its industrial base and, in particular,

military industry, was concentrated in the European part of the country. And if Hitler had been able to capture this industrial base with a quick blow (or, at worst, destroy it - as long as it did not work for the USSR), then after that the Red Army would have held out exactly as long as the mobilization reserve would have been enough.

What is a mobilization reserve? It is assumed that after the start of the war, the industry of the state is mobilized, that is, it switches to a military footing, starting to work en masse for the war. In the meantime, it is being rebuilt, the army is fighting, using the stockpile accumulated in peacetime, which should be enough before the start of mass deliveries of military products to the army. Now imagine that the mobile stock is over - and the products from the factories are not coming. Why? Yes, because the main industrial regions in the USSR were Moscow, Leningrad and Ukraine. Knowing the state of the Red Army, Hitler could be sure that, at a minimum, he would capture Ukraine and Leningrad during the first months of the war. This means that it will inflict such a blow on the Soviet defense industry that it will not be able to supply the army. That's all, and the end of the Soviet Union. Even

at the initial stage of the development of the Barbarossa plan, Hitler wrote in his notes to it: ***"The***

purpose of the operation should be to destroy the Russian armed forces, to capture the most important economic centers and destroy other industrial centers, primarily in the Yekaterinburg region; in addition, it is necessary to take possession of the Baku

region. As you can see, Hitler's plans are extremely simple and unmistakable: to seize the industrial regions of the Soviet Union, then divide the occupied territory into several protectorates, cut off the rest of the country from the seas, impose severe restrictions on supplies so that a second industrialization cannot be carried out - and leave Russia to its own fate. . And after all, these plans were absolutely feasible!

Did Stalin understand this? And what do

you think? Therefore, the main task of the first stage of the war was not the absolutely impossible defeat of the German army in those conditions, not even the preservation of territories. The first stage of the war was to be a struggle to save resources, and in the first place

defense industry. If she can be saved, Hitler's plans will be broken, and he will get involved in a war of resources, in which Germany obviously had no chance. And, despite the first defeats, then the Red Army will still move west. If it fails, there will be no "later" for the Soviet Union.

One can understand Hitler's confidence - he could not even imagine in a nightmare what plan the Soviet government would come up with to save its defense complex. And even if he dreamed of this plan, the Fuhrer would have brushed aside the delusional dream and rolled over to the other side to see something more reasonable. It's very understandable - well, who in the world of that time represented the possibilities of a

planned economy? The plan was to relocate several thousand defense factories to the east as soon as possible, after the start of the war. Not just to take out, but to prepare sites, engineering networks, access roads in advance, to resolve issues of energy and other supplies. All this was done, and by the end of the five months allotted by Hitler to defeat the USSR, the factories had already begun to produce products. And the Red Army, whatever they were, managed to detain the enemy and give them the opportunity to do so. So the Soviet Union implemented its strategic plans for the initial period of the war, but Hitler did not. Well, for whom, in this case,

the debut of the campaign was successful, and for whom it was not?

Mark Solonin

**The defeat of the forty-first: causes and
culprits**

Chapter 1

Games of the 41st year

Operational games and field trips were the most important element in the combat training of the officers and staffs of the Red Army. The recently declassified documents of the “games” provide rich information for reflection on how the top military leadership of the USSR saw a future war with Germany, what they expected from their troops and enemy troops.

Even the most cursory review of the archival funds available today shows that the work in the headquarters of the Red Army was in full swing and was in full swing, military games of the army and front scale were not carried out much, but very much. So, only in the last six months before the actual start of the war, the following events took place (the names of the events are indicated in accordance

with archival documents): • Operational card game in the Baltic OVO (February); • bilateral operational game in the Odessa Military District

(February); • field trip of the headquarters of the Leningrad, Ural and Oryol districts (March);

• field trip in the Arkhangelsk MD (March); • Operational war game in the Moscow Military District (March); • Operational two-way game in Kharkiv Military District (May); • front-line operational game in the Western OVO (March); • front-line field trip in the Baltic OVO (April); • staff operational-strategic game in the Arkhangelsk Military District

(April); • team operational game in the Moscow Military District (May); • front-line operational game in the Kiev OVO (May); • joint exercises of the headquarters of the Transcaucasian Military

District and the Caspian military flotilla (May); • front-line field trip in the Baltic OVO (June). And this list is far from complete; this is only what we managed to discover during a cursory review of documents, and the Far Eastern theater of operations was completely excluded from

army games and the so-called army flyers are not mentioned at all. Of course, such events were not limited to the level of military districts; strategic games were also regularly held with the participation of the top command staff of the Red Army, during which general plans for the use of the USSR Armed Forces were worked out and refined. In relation to 1941, two strategic games are known, held in January (described in detail by P. Bobylev in the article "Rehearsal of the disaster", VIZH, Nos. 7, 8 for 1993) and the mysterious May game (see M. Solonin, "Unknown game of May 41st).

"Orange" is not considered neutral ... "

If paleobiologists reconstruct the appearance of a dinosaur from several fragments of bones, then it is not an insurmountable problem for a military historian to reconstruct the Grand Plan on the basis of documents from district (front) operational plans and headquarters games. For example, one does not have to guess for a long time about why the joint field trip of the headquarters of the Leningrad, Ural and Oryol districts took place on March 12-20, 1941. Yes, on the geographical map these districts are separated by hundreds of kilometers, but as part of the war plan with Finland, they had to jointly "invade central Finland, defeat the main forces of the Finnish army here and take control of the central part of Finland." Four armies were supposed to be deployed to defeat and take possession: the 7th and 23rd from the troops of the Leningrad District, the 20th at the base of the Orlovsky troops and the 22nd at the base of the troops of the Ural districts.

It was these tasks - hardly compatible with the spirit and letter of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty of March 12, 1940 - that were worked out during a field trip, as stated in direct text in NPO Directive No. OP / 503596 of March 28, 1941: "On a field trip a FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATION was practiced (so, in capital letters, in the original document - M.S.) in difficult winter conditions ... The main purpose of the field trip was to check the readiness of front and army departments in organizing and conducting a modern operation in winter

Karelian-Finnish Theatre. The level of secrecy with which the field trip was carried out is noteworthy - even the sealed safe at the headquarters of the Leningrad District seemed to be an insufficiently reliable place for the subsequent storage of such documents; On April 3, the head of the General Staff of the Spacecraft (that is, Comrade Zhukov) ordered the chief of staff of the LenVO "by April 10 to submit to the Operational Directorate of the General Staff an act for the destruction of the assignment and full maps for a field trip to the LenVO [carried out] in March 1941. All undestroyed tasks and stuffed return the cards to them to the OU GSh. Of particular interest are the

operational games conducted by the command of the Kyiv OVO (future Southwestern Front). It was this front that was to deliver the main blow in the direction of Lviv - Krakow, it was there that the most powerful grouping of Red Army troops was to be concentrated (in particular, surpassing the other three districts / fronts in the number of tank divisions and "new types" tanks combined). Alas, this special interest was foreseen by someone, and among the declassified archive funds at the moment there are neither tasks for operational games in KOVO, nor descriptions of the course of such games. The entire "array of information" now available is reduced to a few fragmentary references to the game held in May 1941.

So, on April 26, 1941, the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the KOVO, colonel (future marshal) Bagramyan, reported to the head of the OU General Staff: "I present tasks for command and staff exercises with communications equipment of the 5th and 6th Armies and a front-line operational game. Attachments: assignments on 115 sheets ... a plan for conducting a front-line operational game on 7 sheets ... a map of the situation by 18.00 on May 12 ... a map of the general situation by 12.00 on May 6 ... "On April 30, 1941, Deputy Head of the General Staff, Major General Anisov, sends to the Chief of Staff of the Red Army Air Force the following telegram: "In the period May 12-18, 1941, command and staff exercises of the headquarters of the 5th and 6th Armies of the KOVO are being held. For these exercises, it is advisable to involve the headquarters of the 2nd Air Corps, consisting of 7 people. Please give instructions ... "On May 4, 1941, the deputy head of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Vatutin, sends a response telegram No. OP / 1409 to the headquarters of the Kyiv district:

"To make amendments to the task and plan of the front-line operational game. 1) Do not consider the "Orange" as neutral, but consider them from the first stage of the game on the side of the "Western". 2) The organization and forces of the "orange" take real and strengthen with one army corps and a tank division of the "western". 3) Do not create a southern front at the last stage, leaving the 16th Army subordinate to the South-Western Front. I remind you to take all measures to maintain the secrecy of the game."

That's all that is known. One can only assume that, taking into account the chronology of events (the game in KOVO was held from May 12 to 18, and the strategic "May Game" took place on the 20th of May 1941) and special attention paid to the actions of the right-flank 5th and 6th th Army - during the operational game in Kiev, a "fragment" of the large strategic operation that was played out during the May game was worked out. On the map it looked like this.

Having preempted the "Eastern" in deployment, the "Western" started the war...

As part of the general strategic plan of the war, the troops of the Baltic OVO (North-Western Front) had to solve defensive tasks (in some versions of the Grand Plan, supplemented by a private offensive operation to "cut off" the Suwalki salient). And somehow it happened that it was precisely on the command and staff exercises in the Baltic OVO that there is a significant array of documents available to historians.

In February 1941, a district operational game was held in PribOVO on the theme "Defensive operation of the front with subsequent transition to the offensive to destroy the enemy." The task approved on February 12 ordered to play the following situation:

"Western", having warned the "Eastern" in the deployment, 5.6.41 started the war. The "Western" strike the main blow in the south, against the Ukrainian (as in the text - M.S.) Front, concentrating large forces at the same time in East Prussia, where they develop a blow in the Siauliai and Kaunas directions. Actions of at least 30 infantry divisions with

tanks and large aircraft ... To the south, the troops of the Western Front of the "Eastern" continue to concentrate for a strike in the western direction, successfully repelling attempts by the "Western" to cross the state border with cover units. The border with the Western Front: Polotsk, Oshmyany, Druskeninkai, Suwalki, Letzen..."

So, according to the terms of the "game", exactly what happened in June 1941 happened in real history. At least this is how the operational report of the General Staff of the Red Army number one described the situation at 10 a.m. on June 22: "The enemy, having preempted our troops in deployment, forced the Red Army units to take up battle in the process of taking up their starting position according to the cover plan ..." Another feature the similarity of the task for the game and the real events of June 41st is manifested in the fact that the troops of the North-Western Front of the "Eastern" are scattered at a great distance from each other; the two armies of the first echelon contain no more than half of the total number of formations of the front (15 out of 33 rifle divisions, 4 out of 7 tank

brigades, 6 out of 11 separate artillery regiments). On this, in fact, the similarities between the game and the future unknown to anyone at that time end. Then there are serious differences. First of all, the drafters of the task for the game made a radical mistake in determining the direction of the enemy's main attack: where (in the Belarusian direction), where in reality the Germans concentrated their main forces, according to the rules of the game, the "Western" mark time, unsuccessfully trying to cross the border. At the same time, the troops of the Western Front of the "Eastern" are slowly "finishing their concentration and preparing to go on the offensive at the end of June." It is noteworthy that this mistake clearly coincides with the misinformation that the German special services threw to Soviet intelligence by all means available to them: allegedly, the German command is planning a grandiose coverage of the Red Army troops with the main blow on the northern and southern flanks,

through the Baltic states and Bessarabia. Unlike what will happen in reality, the troops of the "Western" are also deeply echeloned, while almost half of all forces are concentrated in the second echelon (18 out of 39 infantry divisions, 4 out of 5 tank divisions, 2 out of 2 light divisions, 9 out of 22 regiments of artillery). Mobile formations (tank and light divisions)

almost completely withdrawn to the second echelon and patiently waiting for the infantry and artillery of the first echelon to break through a fairly wide "gap" in the defense of the "eastern".

And yet, the most incredible thing from the point of view of our current knowledge of the events of the initial period of the war is the chronology of the events of the operational game. The conditional "war" begins on June 5, after which the "Western" spend 12 days (!!!) to reach the main defensive zone of the "Eastern", which lies 30-40 kilometers from the border. Moreover, this stage of "combat operations" was not practiced at all during the game, it was only briefly mentioned in the task.

The hostilities played out during the exercise begin on a conditional June 17th. The "Western", having concentrated on the 60-kilometer section of the breakthrough (from Kvedarn to Taurogen) 12 infantry divisions against 3 rifle divisions of the "Eastern", by the end of June 18 break through the front. A tank avalanche of unimaginable numbers rushes into the resulting gap - more than 4 thousand tanks (in real history, the 4th tank group of the Wehrmacht operating in the Siauliai direction was armed with about 650 tanks and self-propelled guns). From June 18 to June 25, the "Eastern" retreat to Siauliai with stubborn battles. To the south, in the Kaunas direction, where the enemy has "only" 10 infantry divisions and 725 tanks, the "eastern" retreat and consolidate on the left (western) bank of the Neman. At the second stage of the game (from

the conditional June 25 to July 3), the offensive of the "Western" was stopped everywhere, the front stretching for 420 kilometers stabilized. Having received significant reinforcements (5 rifle divisions), the conditional 1st Army of the "Eastern" (the headquarters of the real 8th Army of PribOVO played for it) counterattacked the enemy and threw him back from Siauliai. In the meantime, in the operational rear of the "Eastern", in the Panevezys-Jelgava zone, there is a concentration of fresh units of the Red Army, redeployed from the depths of the country. At the same time, the command of the "Eastern", showing iron restraint, does not throw suitable units directly from the echelon to the front for a feverish "plugging holes" (this is exactly what the Soviet command did in real history throughout the summer of 1941). The only thing that was done was to remove anti-tank artillery battalions from six rifle divisions of the second echelon of the front (18

anti-tank guns in each), a mobile battle group was formed from them, which stops the advance of German tanks towards Siauliai. By the morning of the conditional July 3, the

concentration of the strike force of the "Eastern" was completed. The general balance of forces of the parties at this moment is as follows: the "eastern" 43 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, 11 tank and 5 motorized brigades; the "western" 39 infantry, 5 tank and 2 light divisions. In terms of military equipment: the "Eastern" 6614 tanks and 4358 guns, the "Western" 6525 tanks (it's incomprehensible - where could they come from in such a quantity?) And 3624 guns. As you can see, the forces are almost equal, however, half of the "eastern" formations are fresh troops that did not suffer losses in previous battles. The crushing blow of the "Eastern" forces the "Western" to a hasty retreat. In three days (July 3, 4, 5), the "eastern" ones advance 100

kilometers, from Siauliai to the border. The Kaunas grouping of the "Western", found themselves in a semi-encirclement in the bend of the Neman, abandons heavy equipment and breaks into East Prussia with battles. A curtain.

On sleepless airfields

Deserves close attention and a description of the actions of the Air Force sides. In the task for the game we read:

"Western Air Force from 5.6. raids of 20-30 aircraft operate on the airfields of the "Eastern" located southwest of the line Jelgava, Panevezys, Shvenchenis, on railway junctions, unloading stations and railway bridges, on the troops of the "Eastern" in the area of Jelgava, Panevezys, Siauliai preventing them from concentrating. 1100-1200 aircraft take part in the operation, 50% of which are fighters.

The Air Forces of the "Eastern" since June 5, covering the concentration of their troops, have been fighting enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground, especially stubborn battles are taking place in the Siauliai direction, where 150-200 aircraft are simultaneously participating in air battles; are fighting against the operational transportation of the enemy, acting at railway junctions, unloading stations and highways,

on the accumulation of enemy troops in the area of Tilsit, Insterburg, Goldap, Gumbinen and on the ports of Memel, Karkeln, Labiau and Pillau.

In order to have time to simultaneously solve such a wide range of tasks, the military aviation of the "Eastern" works with incredible (when compared with the reality of the war in the air of 1941-1945) intensity. So, in the period of the conditional June 14-18, the Eastern Air Forces carry out six (!) half-sorties of fighters, from 2 to 4 half-sorties of bombers and attack aircraft per day.

However, the most surprising thing is the losses that the Eastern Air Force suffered with such an intensity of combat use (and after repeated raids by 20-30 enemy aircraft on the airfield, moreover). By June 18, the 6th mixed air division has a shortage (which, strictly speaking, is not equivalent to the word "losses" - the division could have had some shortage of aircraft even before the start of "combat operations") 68 aircraft, 254 aircraft are in combat readiness; 2nd GARDEN - shortage of 65 aircraft, 254 aircraft are also in service; 1st GARDEN - incomplete 51, 268 in service. And these are the heaviest losses. Other air divisions lost from 17 to 45 aircraft. In general, the shortfall (losses) of the Eastern Air Force by the conditional June 18 is 322 aircraft, or 17 percent of the number remaining in service. From June 22 to June 27, three more air divisions

(total 420 fighters and 473 bombers) are included in the Eastern Air Force, which, as we see, more than covers losses; by the beginning of the July offensive, the "eastern" already had 2833 aircraft in service. Aviation "Western" by that time somewhat weakened, they "only" 2393 aircraft. It remains only to recall that in reality, as of June 22, 1941, the 1st Air Force of the Luftwaffe included, including faulty, 434 combat aircraft.

Second try

Compared to what happened in real June 1941, the events of "game June" seem like a sweet fairy tale today. The high command of the Red Army did not look at them like that at all - the documents contain a long list of identified

shortcomings, shortcomings and mistakes in the actions of headquarters and conditional "troops". For this or some other reason, but carried out in PribOVO from April 15 to April 21, 1941, the front-line field trip was devoted to working out the same task: "Defensive operation of the front and armies in the conditions of the offensive of large enemy forces with an incomplete concentration of their troops; carrying out a counterattack with forcing a river barrier. The geography of the conditional "combat actions", the directions of strikes and the lines of defense of the parties almost completely coincided with the February game

on the maps. Some differences - and in the useful direction of making the exercises more realistic - are observed only in quantitative parameters. Firstly, the offensive of the "Western" is developing noticeably faster this time: starting the operation on the morning of April 17 (the game and real time of the field trip coincided), by the end of the day on April 22, they crossed the Dubysa River and occupied the city of Prienai on the left (western) bank of the Neman ; the advance rate was about 15–20 kilometers per day. Secondly, the number of rifle divisions (11 units) in the two armies of the first echelon of the "Eastern" exactly coincided with the composition of the real 8th and 11th Armies of the PribOVO; just like in real June 41, there were only 8 rifle divisions directly in the border zone. Closer to the real (although still overestimated) was the composition of the "Western" grouping - 30 infantry divisions, 6 tank and 2 motorized (on June 22, 1941, the German Army Group North included 20 infantry divisions, 3 tank and 3 motorized).

It is noteworthy that the aviation of the "Eastern" this time performs 12 sorties of fighters and 8 sorties of bombers in 5 days of conditional "combat operations", and even this level of tension is assessed by the inspectors from the General Staff as "somewhat overestimated sorties". In general, everything ended successfully, the enemy received the counterattack put to him from the line of Kelme, Betagol to the south, to the Neman (although the crossing of the river, originally envisaged by the assignment, was not practiced during the field trip). The inspectors noted the increased - in comparison with the February game - the coherence of the work of the headquarters and wrote another long list of comments.

The 3rd NPO Directorate (military counterintelligence) did not stand aside either. On May 16, 1941, the assistant to the head of the 3rd Directorate, captain of state security Moskalenko, sent a memorandum "On shortcomings in the operational field trip of the Baltic OVO" to Vatutin. Noting a number of mistakes in ensuring secrecy, covert command and control of troops and the protection of headquarters, the "special officer" drew attention to the main thing: "The operational task was drawn up according to a template. The same topic, carried out on army trips (a defensive operation with limited forces and means, followed by a transition to a counteroffensive), and each time gave the enemy the opportunity to break through our defenses with large forces, and then these large forces stopped and waited for our counterattack ... "Next the front-line

field trip took place in PribOVO from 3 to 8 June. Colonel Enyukov signed a report on it by the "senior group of commanders of the General Staff of the Spacecraft" on Monday, June 16; less than a week remained before the start of the real war. The theme of the exercises is the same: "Organization and conduct of a counterattack in a front-line defensive operation with the crossing of a river barrier." The idea of the operation and the direction of the strikes of the parties have

changed somewhat: "The North-Eastern Front of the "Western" in the 4th, 13th and 7th Armies (ten army corps and two mechanized corps) crossed the state border at the end of May and is developing an offensive in the Kaunas direction on both banks of the river. Neman. The northwestern front of the "eastern" (9th and 5th Armies, thirteen rifle divisions) retreats under the onslaught of superior enemy forces, while creating a strike force (16th Army consisting of six rifle divisions and two mechanized corps) in the Siauliai area for attacking the flank and rear of the "Western" ones operating in the direction of Kaunas. In the first days of a

conditional war, the affairs of the "Eastern" are going very badly. By 14:00 on June 3, the "Western" advanced 150 kilometers east of the border, crossed the Dubysa River, crossed the Neman on a wide front from Sredniki to Druskininkai, reached the western suburbs of Vilnius and are striving to build on success with a strike of tank formations through Kedainiai to Panevezys.

However, this time the combat actions of the most difficult first days of the "war" are not played out, they are only mentioned in the assignment for the field trip. The game starts on June 3rd. The "Eastern", in the grouping of which anti-tank artillery brigades first appear, push them to the Kedainiai-Jonava region and, in fierce battles on June 4 and 5, stop the advance of the "Western" towards Panevezys. At the same time, in the Kryazhai-Tituvenai area (that is, on both sides of the Dubysa River), the "eastern" are concentrating a strike force consisting of two mechanized corps (in reality, these could be the 12th and 3rd PribOVO mechanized corps) and inflict a crushing blow to the flank enemy. By the end of the day on June 5, the tanks of the

"Eastern" reach the Neman in the Jurbarkas, Sredniki (now Syaradzhyus) strip. Two days later, infantry (six infantry divisions) approaches the Neman and successfully crosses it, reaching the deep rear of the "Western" group that has broken through to Vilnius. On this "game" was completed. The report cheerfully states: "On this field trip, one of the options for the actions of the PribOVO troops was worked out when the "Western" inflicted the main blow in the Kaunas direction with an approximately double balance of forces (so in the document, we are talking about the double numerical superiority of the "Western" - M.S.). The issue of using PTABR has been worked out.

Concluding a brief review of the last field trip for the command of the Baltic OVO, it is worth noting that the operation played out in it almost exactly coincides with the situation on the North-Western Front that developed during the strategic "May game". The only difference is that in May the "Western", who broke through the Neman to Vilnius, received three blows from three directions: the 12th mechanized corps advanced from Siauliai to the south, the 11th mechanized corps of the Western Front struck from the city of Lida to the northwest, on the right flank of the enemy, and the 3rd mechanized corps of the North-Western Front, prudently assigned earlier to Shvenchenis, delivered a blow "on the forehead" to Vilnius. It can be assumed that such a dispersion of forces was recognized as erroneous and in the operation played out during the June field trip, two PribOVO mechanized corps were combined into one shock fist.

burden of choice

Everything changes when you look at a military topographic map: countless blue spots sparkle in your eyes... Suwalkija and Mazowsze are the land of dense coniferous forests and countless large and small lakes. An ideal place for hiking and water tourism, but it is incredibly difficult to fight there. In such terrain, the Red Army would inevitably lose its main "trump card" - huge herds of fast light tanks stuck in narrow inter-lake passages, on the swampy banks of forest streams, Soviet tanks would turn into a stationary target for German anti-tank guns. A serious problem for the attackers is created not only by geography, but also by the history of this region, which for many centuries was the arena of military rivalry between the

Commonwealth and German knightly orders. For hundreds of years, they built, built and built all kinds of fortifications (by the way, the largest medieval fortress in Europe is located right there, in Malbork, German Marienburg). After the division of Poland, the border line between the Russian and German empires passed through these places, and there, with new strength and new technical capabilities, they began to build fortresses and pillboxes. Ultimately, the southern strip of East Prussia turned into a huge, almost insurmountable fortified area. Nevertheless, the temptation of a simple decision (to encircle East Prussia with one blow) turned out to be so great that the option of attacking Allenstein and further to the sea was repeatedly considered: in the August and September (1940) versions of the plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, during the operational game in the Western OVO (September 1940) and in the first of two January (1941) strategic games. But in the end, the Soviet military-political leadership came to a firm decision to abandon the "northern option", since "the struggle on this front could lead to protracted battles, tie up our main forces, and not give the desired and quick effect." The direction south of the Belostok ledge also created serious problems for the advancing army - three rivers (Narev, Bug, Vepsh) stood in its way, and in their lower, that is, most

full flow. The very topography of the future theater of military operations led to the only rational decision - to go to the Vistula in about a hundred-kilometer section between Warsaw and Deblin (that is, between the mouths of the Bug and Vepsh rivers). It was this variant of action with various variations that was practiced in 1941 during the command and staff exercises of the Western OVO.

On the Warsaw direction

The first of the currently known front-line operational game of the Western OVO was held from March 15 to 21. Theme - "Offensive operation of the front and the army." The calendar and conditional time in this game coincided (in the task for the game we read: "The length of the day, weather conditions and road conditions are real on the days of the game"). Conditional "fighting" began on the morning of March 16. Directive of the command of the Western Front No. 027 set the following tasks for the troops of the "Eastern": "The troops of the Western Front to carry out a private operation to capture

the Suwalki ledge, reliably hiding behind the 1st Army from the north, complete (emphasized by me - M.S.) the defeat of the **opposing** enemy and by 23.3. go out to the river The Vistula is in readiness for a subsequent strike in the direction of Lodz (130 kilometers southwest of Warsaw - M.S.) to defeat, together with the Southwestern Front, the main forces of the Warsaw-Sandomierz "Western" group (Map 1).

The words about "completing the rout" are not an accidental slip of the tongue. The previous events were described in the introduction to the game as follows: "As a result of oncoming battles, the troops of the Western Front of the "Eastern" repelled the offensive of the "Western" and, having launched a counteroffensive with concentrated forces, to defeat the opposing enemy grouping by the end of 15.3. went to the border of the river. Pissa, r. Narev, b. Bug. The position of the troops according to the Opersvodka of the headquarters of the Western Front No. 017 of 15.3.1941.

At the same time, the "oncoming battles" and the "offensive of the "Western" ones themselves are not described in any way, and even more so, they were not worked out during the game. Everything happened easily and simply, as can be judged by the

introductory to the game to the losses of the "Eastern" tank formations. Before the start of the "combat actions" of the game (by the end of the day on March 15), 8 tank divisions and 20 tank brigades of the "eastern" - and according to the staffing table, this is about 7.5 thousand tanks - irretrievably lost only 73 (!!!) tanks. One percent of the original population. There are no irretrievable losses in eight tank formations at all. Even taking into account 396 tanks sent for medium and major repairs, the specific losses of the "Eastern" are

negligible. But the extraordinary success of the "oncoming battle" is not limited to this either. The boundary of the Pissa, Narew, Bug rivers is the border line agreed with Hitler in September 1939 (more precisely, "the line of demarcation of the state interests of the USSR and Germany on the territory of the former Polish state" - that's what it was called in the documents). However, if we take Operational Report No. 017 mentioned above and find on the map the places named in it, Ksebki, Kadzidlo, Krushevo, Brok, Sarnaki and Ossowka, it will become clear that the "eastern" not only pushed the "western" to the border, but also crossed over to opposite bank of border rivers. Moreover, they did this in two areas critical for the upcoming offensive: northwest of Ostrolenok (on the tip of the Bialystok ledge) and northwest of Brest, where the "eastern" turned out to be beyond the Bug, 10 kilometers from the Polish city of Byala Podlyaska. Such an amazing coincidence of the

results of a short (from March 12 to March 15) "oncoming battle" with the optimal line of the initial position of troops for the "eastern" for an offensive from the border to the west makes, in my opinion, a reasonable assumption that no one can repel the invasion of the "western" and didn't intend to. The mention of him is a ritual phrase, a fig leaf that was supposed to hide the real plans of the high command from the persons admitted to the game (here it is worth noting that the circle of informed persons was very wide and even the Task for the game itself was printed in the form of a brochure for 99 sheets). For mid-level commanders, the conditional "war" was to begin strictly according to the Charter: "If the enemy imposes a war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the attacking armies ever. We will wage war aggressively, with

the most decisive goal of the complete defeat of the enemy on his own territory ...
"(Field Regulations, PU-39, chapter 1, paragraph 2).

A game of giveaway?

To realize the decisive goal of complete defeat, an unrealistically large number of formations were included in the Western Front of the "Eastern": 67 (sixty-seven) rifle and 3 cavalry divisions, 4 mechanized corps and 20 tank brigades. So this still seemed not enough, and in the course of the "game" the front received reinforcements consisting of 21 rifle divisions and 8 tank brigades. Never, according to any of the known plans for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, not according to any of the statements of the distribution of forces, such a quantity of infantry was intended for the Western Front, the real numbers are in the range from 41 to 24 rifle divisions. Yes, the Red Army had 198 rifle divisions, and abstractly speaking, one could find 88 divisions for the Western Front, but this is a completely different alignment of forces, suggesting a completely different war plan from the real one.

According to the scenario of the March "game", the enemy in the Western Front had only 33 infantry and 2 tank divisions in the first echelon and 6 more infantry divisions in reserve, in the Warsaw and Neidenburg region (now Nidzica - 80 kilometers northwest of Ostroleka). Continuing to "play giveaway", the compilers of the assignment write: "In the direction of Augustow, Sedlec, the enemy uses only medium and light tanks of old models." In other words, counterattacking the advancing armada of the "Eastern" Germans is easy

nothing.

With such introductory results of the game was quite expected. Within six days, the "Eastern" completely defeated the "Western". The main strike force of the Western Front, the 2nd Army (24 infantry and 3 cavalry divisions, 2 mechanized corps - far from every front during the Second World War had such numbers) made a deep coverage of the Warsaw enemy grouping, through Pshasnys, Tsekhanuv went to the Vistula and forced it. The slightly less numerous 15th Army (20 rifle divisions and 2 mechanized corps) advanced 130

kilometers from Brest to Deblin and was preparing to force the Vistula with the task of closing the encirclement ring around the defeated enemy together with the mobile formations of the 2nd Army. To complete the picture, the "eastern" landed large airborne assault forces, which captured the crossings on the Vistula with a swift blow. In an

unusual way, the task for the game described the war in the air: "The air forces of the "Western" in the period of March 12-15 were actively operating on troops, railway junctions and airfields. In the period of March 13-15, the "Eastern" air forces continued to fight for air superiority, covered the strike force of the 2nd Army, interacted with ground forces to destroy the retreating enemy troops, stopped railway transportation, destroyed [enemy] aircraft at airfields and did not allowed the approach of enemy reserves to the front along dirt roads. It is not clear what the aviation of the "eastern" did on March 12 and when it began what it "continued" on March 13-15. In any case, having 5657 aircraft (four times more than it was in real June 41st) against 2611 "Western" aircraft (twice as many as it was in reality) and, of course, without disappearing without a trace after the first strike on their own airfields, the "Eastern" air forces successfully solved all the tasks assigned to them: they won air superiority, interacted, stopped, destroyed and did not allow ...

April "fly"

For the sake of truth, it must be admitted that the General Staff of the Red Army very quickly realized that there was little practical benefit from a command-staff game with an outrageously overestimated number of its own troops. The last "volleys" of the March "game" had not yet died down, when on March 20, 1941, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Vatutin, approved the "Assignment for solving the army flyer". This most interesting document was sent on April 1-3 to the headquarters of nine (!) military districts. The commanders had to analyze the situation that had developed as a result of the conditional "combat actions", make a decision for the commander of the conditional "3rd Army" of the West

front and prepare the appropriate combat order. Deadline (for different districts) - from 13 to 20 April. And this time the "war" was as follows: the

"Western", having suffered a defeat on the Graevo-Brest front (that is, from the northern to the southern bases of the Bialystok ledge), retreated in the Warsaw direction, covering the approach and concentration of reserves. May 15, 1941 "Western" went on the offensive:

a) from the Vyshkow, Ostrow-Mazowiecki area with the forces of 15-20 infantry and 2 tank divisions in the general direction of Bialystok;

b) from the region of Lublin, Kotsk, Demblin with the forces of 25-30 infantry and 2-3 tank divisions in the direction of Brest. In

the direction of Pshasnysh, Modlin and Siedlce, Warsaw, the "Western" under pressure from the "Eastern" continue to retreat, putting up stubborn resistance at previously prepared lines.

The western front of the "eastern" (1st, 10th, 3rd, 5th Armies) in the battle at the turn of the Narew and Bug rivers defeated the "western" and is developing an operation with the aim of a concentric strike of the 1st and 3rd Armies in the direction of Warsaw to defeat the Warsaw grouping of the "Western" and go to the river. Vistula by the end of May 20..." (Map 2).

As you can see, the general concept of the operation and the direction of the main attacks of the "Eastern" completely coincide with the March "game" in the Western OVO. As

before, it is planned to defeat the Warsaw grouping of the "Western" with a concentric strike by two armies, one of which (1st in the game) is advancing northwest of the Narew River and goes to the Vistula west of Warsaw, and the other (3rd in the game) breaks through to Vistula from the southern bypass of the Belostok ledge, through Siedlce, Lukow. Two other, significantly smaller armies (10th and 5th in the game) tie up the enemy forces at the junctions between the two shock armies of the Western Front and the neighboring Southwestern Front.

At the same time, the task for the April "fly" has two significant differences from the March "game". One of them is clearly visible on the schematic map: this time the enemy is not limited to passive defense, but resolutely counterattacks with large forces, striking at the two weakest armies of the Western Front and achieving significant successes (in the Ostrolenka zone,

Ostrow-Mazowiecki "combat operations" are transferred to Soviet territory).

Secondly, the balance of forces is completely different: in the zone of the 10th Army, the "Western" almost twofold numerical superiority (15-20 infantry and 2 tank divisions against 9 rifle divisions and one mechanized corps of the "Eastern"), in the south, in the zone 5th Army, the superiority of the "Western" is simply overwhelming (25-30 infantry and 2-3 tank divisions against 6 rifle divisions of the "Eastern").

As a result, "on the morning of May 15, the troops of the 5th Army, met by a counterattack on the Vepsh River, began to withdraw to the river. Tysmenitsa; the left flank has been broken through in the Stochek, Lublin sector, enemy tank and motorized formations are advancing into the gap between the 5th Army and the 9th

Army of the Southwestern Front. As already mentioned, the task for the "fly" was sent to nine military districts. This list includes both the nearest neighbors of ZapOVO (the Baltic and Kiev districts), and the most distant ones, including the Siberian and Central Asian (although, it would seem, where is the Vistula and where is the Amu Darya?). Only the district whose troops are conducting conditional "combat operations" is not on the list. In my opinion, the only explanation for this incident can only be that the command of the Western OVO worked out the scenario of the war described above in more detail, most likely during the district operational game or field trip. But documents on these events have not yet been found.

In anticipation of a disaster

Almost nothing is known about the command and staff exercises of the Western OVO in May 1941. Little more is known about the great strategic "game" of May 1941, but there is a map, and even that alone allows us to draw some important conclusions. At the junction of the Western and Southwestern fronts, the events of the May "game" developed as follows.

As you can see, the plans of the high command of the Red Army have become more modest, and the mood and expectation are very alarming. The red arrows no longer stretch to Warsaw and beyond the Vistula (and e

all the more so, there are no battles for Budapest and Timisoara on the map, which were played out cheerfully at the strategic "game" in January). Even worse, the enemy manages to invade Soviet territory, and on the northern flank of the Southwestern Front, the line of maximum advance of the "Western" reaches Kovel, Lutsk and Berestechko (70-80 kilometers east of the border). The actions of the main grouping of the Western Front are reduced to delivering

two blows strictly to the south, through Siedlce, Lukow and Byala Podlaska, Parchev in the general direction of Lublin. There they meet with the shock group of the Southwestern Front and close the ring around the Krasnystav "Western" encircled in the Chelm region. The composition of the Western Front is taken as quite realistic (realistic for a completed or close to that strategic deployment of the mobilized Red Army, and not for a "surprise attack" situation). We still do not know what conclusions were drawn as a result of the strategic May "game", what decisions were made (more precisely, brought to the attention of the performers) during the meeting of the highest command staff in Stalin's office

on May 24, 1941. The last weeks before the war still remain one of the most mysterious periods of Soviet history. Especially noteworthy are the six documents that were found in the archives of TsAMO, f. 28, op. 11627, d. 27, ll. 160–165. These documents are three huge maps and three small sheets of paper attached to each of the maps. The maps show the "situation on the operational field trip" of the headquarters of the 3rd, 10th and 4th armies of the Western OVO, respectively (on the instructions of the field trip, they are numbered 19, 21 and 22). The General Staff of the spacecraft received maps with a short "accompaniment" on June 4, 5 and 12, respectively. The time for the game was set as follows: from the conditional June 13 to 18 - for the 3rd Army, from June

16 to 23 - for the 10th Army, from June 26 to 29 - for the 4th Army. Whether all or at least some of these trips were practically carried out is unknown. An extremely interesting phrase is found in the cover letter to the map of the field trip of the headquarters of the 3rd Army. Deputy Chief of Staff of the ZapOVO Major General Semenov reports: "In connection with the summons of the commander of the troops to the People's Commissar

defense at 11.6. The field trip has been rescheduled and will take place from June 5 to 9." This phrase is interesting because it allows you to remove one of the mysteries of June 41st. Judging by the journal of visits to Stalin's office, on the evening of June 11, he met with the commander and PMC of the Baltic OVO. And this is rather strange, since no other commanders of the districts appeared in Stalin's office after the meeting on May 24 and until the start of the war. Why such special attention to the district, which, as can be seen from the plans now known, was it far from the direction of the main attack? Now it becomes clear that Kuznetsov and Dibrova were not alone in Moscow on June 11, the commander of the Western OVO, Pavlov, was there at the same time. It may very well be that the declassification of the documents of the Kiev OVO will expand this list ... As for the scenario of army field

trips planned for June 41st in the Western OVO, in all three cases a variant of a retaliatory counterattack is played out, and this strike is struck after the enemy moved east unusually deep, 70-100 kilometers - there was nothing like this in the previous "games". Three maps are not "pieces of the same mosaic", the lines of defense and directions of attacks of neighboring armies do not coincide according to the scenarios of field trips. On the other hand, comparing the maps with the text of section VI of the Western OVO cover plan ("Possible options for ensuring the main operational directions in the event of a breakthrough through the army defense areas of the enemy's motorized mechanized units"), we find almost complete similarity of the tasks and operational solutions. Most likely, during field trips it was planned to work out the actions of the command and staffs of the armies according to the cover plan, which was drawn up and approved just in June.

One answer and one question

Let's summarize. Despite the fact that the available information is rather chaotically scattered over the time of the first half of the 41st year and the space of the western regions of the USSR, despite the fact that information on the operational "games" of the

powerful, Kyiv OVO, the documents discussed above allow us to draw several important conclusions.

First. The operational preparation of the command and staffs of the Red Army for the war against Germany was carried out, and it was carried out constantly and stubbornly. It is sad that such an ordinary conclusion has to be specially emphasized, but there are still "historians" among us who talk about how Stalin replaced the preparation for war with lovingly looking at Ribbentrop's signature under the Pact on non-aggression.

Second. From January to June 1941, the scenario of operational "games" is undergoing quite distinct changes: the number of "Eastern" troops is becoming smaller and smaller, tasks and successes are becoming less and less ambitious. From the attack on Budapest to counterattacks near Vilnius and Bialystok. Third. The assessment

of the combat effectiveness of our own troops remains consistently high. You can even outline a kind of conditional "pyramid of opportunities". With the numerical equality of forces with the enemy, the Red Army successfully advances - yes, slowly, passing "only" 10 kilometers a day, but it advances. With a two-fold numerical superiority, the "Eastern" smash the "Western" to smithereens. With a twofold numerical superiority of the enemy, the "Eastern" stubbornly defend themselves, passing from time to time to a mobile defense. It is possible to break through the front of the "Eastern" only when the "Western" have a 3-4-5-fold numerical superiority in infantry and overwhelming - in tanks; however, in these cases, a breakthrough does not mean "the beginning of a catastrophe that you understand," but the inevitable crushing counterattack of the Red Army in the coming days on the neighboring, inevitably weakened sector of the enemy's front.

All this allows us to give a reasoned answer to the ill-fated question, which a thousand and once was raised on the pages of books and articles with the titles "The Mystery of June 22", "The Mystery of June 22", "At midnight on June 22 ..." How, how could Stalin calmly go to sleep after intelligence reported...

And what is "wrong", dear comrades? Intelligence reported that up to 500 German tanks were concentrated in the border zone of East Prussia? So they were expected to see 4000 there. Eight times

more. Up to 300 German aircraft were found at the airfields of the Suwalki salient? But according to the scenario of the March "game", there should have been more than a thousand of them there. Because of what, comrade. Stalin had to lose sleep and appetite? Stalin was proud of his logic and reasoned quite logically: all available intelligence information indicated that the concentration of German troops near the borders of the USSR - the grouping that was expected to be seen at the border - was not only not completed, but had not really begun yet. And if the troops of the indestructible Red Army are capable of shaking the enemy for two weeks in a border battle, then is it worth it to worry so much - Directive No. 1 will go to the troops an hour earlier or an hour later? The question, to which I have

no intelligible answer, is something else. From Kaunas, the command of the 11th Army, the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party, the Chekist and other authorities fled in the afternoon of June 22. They didn't wait until evening. Bialystok will be further away from the border, and there are two rivers on the way to it - all the military, party, Chekist and other authorities fled from Bialystok on the evening of June 22. If we judge people by their deeds - and this has always been considered the only true one - it turns out that the comrade generals did not even have a shadow of a doubt about the Red Army and its ability to resist the Wehrmacht. So why and for whom did they write the "task for the game on 117 sheets"? Why did they draw arrows on the maps day after day, month after month? Whom did they want to fool? Myself? Stalin? Each other?

Chapter

2 June 25th. A provocation that you succumbed to?

On June 25, 1941, Soviet aviation launched a massive bombing attack on cities, ports, railway stations and airfields in Finland. On the evening of the same day, the Finnish parliament decided to consider the country to be at war against the USSR. To these simple and undoubted facts one can

add a few more, no less reliable.

On June 22, 1941 at 7:15 a.m. signed by Timoshenko, Zhukov and Malenkov, the well-known Directive No. 2 was issued ("In connection with the unheard-of impudence attack by Germany on the Soviet Union, I order ..."). The

directive ended with the words:

"Do not make raids on the territory of Finland until special instructions." At 10.45, similar instructions ("do not cross the border with Finland and do not fly over") are given in the Directive of the command of the Northern Front (deployed on the basis of the Leningrad Military District).

On June 23, the ban on opening hostilities against Finland was reaffirmed. In the documents of the command of the Northern Fleet, this was reflected as follows: "The People's Commissar of the Navy gave a directive to the Military Council of the Northern Fleet, by order of the Headquarters of the High Command, until further notice against Finland, no military operations should be carried out."

Step forward, two steps back

On the evening of June 24, signed by the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal Timoshenko, a Directive of the Headquarters of the High Command was issued, which stated: "In order to prevent and disrupt an air strike on Leningrad, planned by the German command in Finland, I order the Military Council of the Northern Front from 06/25/1941 to begin combat operations of our aviation and

crush enemy aircraft with continuous raids day and night ... "In the report of the Sovinformburo

published on June 26 for June 25, the fact of the bombing of Finland was recognized: "Our aviation inflicted a number of crushing blows on German airfields in Finland, and also bombarded Memel, enemy ships north of Libava and the oil town of the port Constance". As you can see, this event was not specifically emphasized, it was only mentioned in a complex sentence along with others.

Probably on the night of June 26-27, the Directive of the Military Council of the Northern Front was issued. There is no number or date on the document. There is no signature of the chief of staff. The time of the drafting of the document can only be judged by the fact that the orders of the formations of the front, duplicating the directive, appear from 2 to 7 in the morning on June 27. The content is even stranger: "Before the opening of hostilities, the ground units of the enemy do not open fire. Only with the opening of artillery fire by him first or during his sudden tank attack, to fall with all the might of our artillery on tanks, on reconnoitered firing positions of enemy artillery and areas of concentration of his tanks and infantry, and with mortar fire on the initial

position of the infantry.

Not to mention the fact that there were no tank units worth mentioning in the Finnish army at all, the very logic of the directive surprises: the initiative for active operations was ordered to voluntarily yield to the enemy. Why? For what? Two days ago, on June 25, Soviet aviation launched a "preemptive strike" - suddenly and treacherously, without declaring war, without officially terminating the Moscow Peace Treaty, without recalling ambassadors, regardless of the obvious political and legal consequences of such actions. But after Finland declared war on the Soviet Union, it was ordered not to open fire first and patiently wait for a "sudden tank attack ..."

To the list of indisputable facts should be added a few more events that did NOT happen. Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia were allies of Nazi Germany, they officially joined the Tripartite Pact ("axis" Berlin - Rome - Tokyo), they provided their territory for accommodation and / or passage

German troops - and yet the Soviet troops did not open any hostilities against these states either in the first days or in the first months of the war. Fascist Italy, a clear and oldest ally of Hitler, even declared war

on the Soviet Union, and did so already at noon on June 22. Thus, the Soviet leadership had indisputable legal grounds for military operations against Italy ("they asked for it themselves"), and the tactical and technical characteristics of Soviet long-range bombers (DB-3f, Er-2, TB-7) theoretically made it possible to strike at any point the industrial north of Italy (Milan, Turin, Florence). However, such a wild idea was never even discussed. In the context of the war that had begun (and how it had begun!) with Germany, the obvious priority for Moscow was to maintain a "bad peace" with all potential adversaries. In particular, the fact that the war with Japan was averted was always and justifiably considered the most important success of Soviet diplomacy. But, perhaps, the threat of "an air strike on Leningrad planned by the German command in Finland" was so great that in order to prevent it, all the arguments of prudence had to be discarded?

balance of power

Today, the answer to this question can be given with exhaustive accuracy. No one planned to strike. Extremely small (for a front stretching from Riga to Odessa), the forces of the Luftwaffe were engaged in their direct business - supporting the offensive of the ground forces. German aviation in the southern and central regions of Finland (that is, where the planes could fly to Leningrad) was represented by a single reconnaissance link (two Dornier Do-215s and one Heinkel He-111). True, there was another reconnaissance link consisting of three Dorniers in northern Finland (Rovaniemi airfield, 780 km from Leningrad), but they could only bomb Leningrad in a suicidal one-way flight.

As for the bomber aviation of Finland itself, it was armed with as many as 27 aircraft, including three Soviet SBs (trophies of the "winter war") and four Douglas DC-3 transport bombers converted into bombers. In total, for an "air strike on Leningrad", the enemy could use a maximum of 30 bombers. Leaving aside the fact that Finnish aviation did not bomb Leningrad even when the front line passed within a five-minute flight from Palace Square, it should be recognized that such an "air armada" created, of course, some threat. However, Leningrad also had something to fight back.

By the beginning of the war, the 2nd Air Defense Corps, deployed in the Leningrad region, was armed with about 600 85 mm caliber guns, 246 76 mm caliber guns, 60 small caliber guns, 230 anti-aircraft machine guns. As well as 263 observation posts, 23 fighter aviation guidance posts, 483 searchlight stations, eight RUS-1 radar stations and 297 barrage balloons. It was the world's largest anti-aircraft artillery grouping (which only Moscow's air defense could compete with), created with the expectation of repelling massive raids by the combined air forces of several "imperialist powers". For comparison, we note that during the famous "Battle for England" (September-October 1940), London was defended by 452 anti-aircraft guns of all calibers, and the "oil heart" of the fascist coalition, the region of the Romanian Ploiesti, covered only 30 anti-aircraft batteries (that is, about 120 guns). But anti-aircraft guns are the last line of defense, they had to join the

battle only if the first and main "line", that is, fighter aircraft, could not complete their task. Only in the nine fighter regiments of the Air Force of the Leningrad Military District (not counting the 158th IAP and the 155th IAP, stationed much south of Leningrad, and not counting the emerging new air regiments) there were 472 fighter pilots. There were a lot more planes. It is almost impossible to give an exact number, since the LenVO Air Force was undergoing an intensive replacement of the aircraft fleet, and in some fighter regiments there were twice as many aircraft as pilots. Tentatively, the number of combat-ready aircraft can be estimated at 620-650 units, including at least 160 of the latest MiG-3 fighters.

And that is not all. In the immediate vicinity of Leningrad, the main forces of the Red Banner Air Force of the Baltic Fleet were based, including the 61st Fighter Brigade (the headquarters of the brigade was New Peterhof). In total, three fighter regiments and seven separate squadrons of the KBF Air Force were armed with 350 fighter aircraft, of which about 300 were in combat-ready condition (including 32 MiG-3s and eight Yak-1s). Without pretending to absolute accuracy, we can say that the Soviet command could counter each Finnish Air Force bomber with about 25-30 fighters.

Unidentified numbers from reliable sources

The glaring discrepancy between the scale of the real threat and the "preemptive actions" of the Soviet leadership is so great that the question involuntarily arises: was there really a Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR of June 24? And this question can be answered today. There was a directive. The archive of the General Staff preserved its handwritten original. With the handwritten signature of Marshal Timoshenko. Let's reread carefully the stating part of the directive: "1. From

reliable sources it has been established that German troops are concentrating on the territory of Finland, with the aim of striking at Leningrad and capturing the Murmansk region and Kandalaksha. To date, up to four infantry divisions have been concentrated in the Rovaniemi-Kemijärvi area and a group of unidentified strength in the areas of Kotka and north of the Hanko Peninsula. German aviation also systematically arrives

on the territory of Finland, from where it carries out raids on our territory. According to reports, the German command intends to launch an air strike on Leningrad in the near future. This circumstance is of decisive importance.

2. In order to prevent and disrupt an air strike on Leningrad, planned by the German command in Finland, I order ... "

This text was declassified and published back in 1996. The great value of the discovered original lies in the fact that it still bears marks about the time of transmission of the directive to the encryption department of the General Staff: 22 hours and 25 minutes. Sent to recipients at 22.40. These figures look amazing next to the last phrase of the directive: "Copies of the given orders to convey to me by 24.00 24.6.41." That is, the decision was made in extreme haste. The situation was assessed as an emergency. They demanded the impossible from subordinates, apparently hoping that they would have time to do at least something. At the

same time, the "available data" on the transfer of German aircraft to Finland was not specified in any way, although they were designated as a "circumstance of decisive importance". The real grouping of German troops in polar Finland is almost exactly defined, while the German troops in southern Finland (in fact, non-existent) are described by the words "group of unknown size." And it is completely incomprehensible - how from the area "Kotka and north of the Hanko Peninsula", that is, from the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland, you can launch an attack on Leningrad; except to wait for a harsh winter, cross the ice to the southern shore of the bay to Tallinn and move east from there ...

"Secret telephone from Berlin..."

Now historians can only find the answer to the last and most important question: who are these "reliable sources" through which the misinformation was brought to the Boss on the evening of June 24? Secret service documents are still unavailable. Even 72 years after the events discussed, that is, in a situation where all the agents and residents mentioned in them have long since passed away. Nevertheless, crumbs of useful information can also be extracted from the well-known journal of visits to Stalin's office.

People's Commissar Timoshenko, Chairman of the Defense Committee (not to be confused with the GKO!) Voroshilov and Chief of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff Vatutin (Chief of the General Staff Zhukov was sent to the South Western Front) entered Stalin's office at 17.30. In the Boss's office, Molotov and Beria were with him - people from the very

"close circle", in those days they practically spent the day and spent the night in Stalin's office. But at 20.00, a man who was an extremely rare guest entered the office: Lieutenant General Philip Golikov, head of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff. In the system of subordination built by Stalin, the head of the Intelligence

Agency was clearly on the sidelines. Thus, for the whole of May and the whole of June (until the 24th), Comrade Golikov was not once summoned to Stalin's office. In April 1941, he appears there only once (April 11), and even then for 30 minutes. In March, he was never there ... So the very fact of the appearance of the head of the RU in Stalin's office can serve as a sufficient basis for the version that intelligence information of an emergency nature was discussed there on the evening of June 24. At the same time, there are no grounds to assert that it was Golikov who reported misinformation to the Master about the concentration of German aviation in southern Finland. Comrade Beria could have been a "reliable source", and some personal agents of Stalin, the head of the Intelligence Department, unknown to science so far, could be called urgently only to hear his assessment of the information received.

Lieutenant-General Golikov left Stalin's office at 21.20, and in the evening of the same day he signed another Intelligence report No. 3/660739, designated as "at 22.00 on June 24" (in this case, in fact, the document could be drawn up and signed a few hours later). It is in it that information about the impending bombardment of Leningrad appears - for the first, only and last time: "According to the information received, Berlin transmitted the following instructions to Finland by secret telephone: on June 24 or on the morning of June 25, an additional 25 thousand German soldiers arrive at the front in Finland and the best air units in order to go on the offensive against Leningrad from Finland, in case of failure, subject military installations to complete destruction: factories and

stations."

<i>Intelligence reported accurately</i>
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A careful reading of other Intelligence Reports of the RU General Staff shows that in most cases quite specific

expressions: "According to front-line intelligence ... undercover intelligence established ... during the hostilities identified ..." The information received from "allied" is directly called: "According to the NKGB". The vague wording used in the Intelligence Report of 10:00 pm on June 24 ("according to the information received") indicates, in my opinion, that it was not the agents of the Intelligence Agency that served as a source of misinformation. Golikov only received this "information from a secret phone" in Stalin's office, and then obediently included it in the Intelligence Report signed by him.

Strictly speaking, one more potential supplier of disinformation can be named - on June 24, People's Commissar of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov appeared in Stalin's office (from 16.45 to 17.00). However, the very short time of his visit - only 15 minutes, and the currently known documents of the Main Naval Staff do not give grounds for the assumption that the "misinformation" came from military sailors.

The intelligence reports of the First Directorate of the Navy for June 23-27 (Nos. 649-658) on the whole quite adequately describe the situation "in the Northern and Baltic theater." Remarkably, the origin of information is always clearly recorded ("according to radio interception, according to undercover intelligence, according to observations of posts ..."). Intelligence fixes (very accurately) the basing of German aircraft in Norway and the continuous transfer of air units to the airfields of northern Norway. Honestly and accurately (without exaggerating the scale and their own successes), two Luftwaffe raids on Kronstadt are described, during which the Germans carried out mining of the bay of the naval base. What is important is that, in fact, after these raids, German aircraft based at the Proverén airfield (East Prussia) landed for refueling at the Finnish Utti airfield, but this fact is not in the Navy Intelligence Reports.

marked.

In the evening report for June 23, with reference to intelligence sources, the arrival in the Finnish ports of the Gulf of Bothnia "60 German transports with troops and weapons" was noted. That's right - the 169th Wehrmacht Infantry Division arrived, which then marched to the area of the polar Kemijärvi to attack Kandalaksha. Intelligence report No. 653 at 19.00 on June 24 fixes, however, very inaccurately, the first appearance of German aircraft on the polar

Finnish airfield Luostari (at first these aircraft were identified as bombers of an unspecified number, in the morning report of June 27 they turn into "8-10 bombers and 6-8 fighters"; in fact, on the eve of the attack on Murmansk, one squadron of fighters consisting of 10 "Messerschmitts" was relocated there "). There is not a word about the basing of at least some German air units in the southern and central regions of Finland. They are not mentioned in the operational reports of the Main Naval Staff for June 22-26.

War and Peace

Now we will try to introduce all of the above into the general context of the military-political situation in 1941. The armed

aggression of the Soviet Union against Finland, which began on November 30, 1939, unexpectedly ended with the signing of the Moscow Peace Treaty on March 12, 1940. The reason why Stalin pardoned Finland (the Finnish army was bleeding with its last drops by the beginning of March) is most likely related to the actions of the Anglo-French bloc: the danger of turning the "strange war" in the West into a very real war of the united forces of Europe against the USSR became too close. . However, even under such conditions, Comrade Stalin managed to impose a "peace treaty" on Finland, according to which vast territories were taken away from Finland (37 thousand square kilometers, which is about five times more than what was seized by force of arms during " Winter War") and 400 thousand Finnish citizens (more than 10 percent of the population) were forced to leave their homes.

For all that, the Kremlin perceived the treaty concluded with Finland as a temporary, forced and unfortunate stop on the way to the complete annexation of Finland. After France was defeated in May-June 1940, and England was actually blocked on its islands, they began to "press" Finland in full. Ultimative demands for the resignation of Finnish government ministers and interference in presidential elections, demands for the "return" to the Soviet Union of the rolling stock of Finnish

railways and stop building defensive structures on the new border, systematic violation of air borders (for the first half of 1941, the Finnish border guard registered 85 overflights of Soviet aircraft), the Moscow-controlled Society for Peace and Friendship with the USSR, which organized bloody street riots with dozens of dead and the wounded...

In January 1941, Moscow ultimatum demanded that Finland's main wealth, the Petsamo nickel mines, be transferred to a joint venture in which 50 percent of the shares would belong to the Soviet side. Finland refused, after which the USSR unilaterally denounced the trade agreement and stopped the supply of goods, including grain, which brought Finland to the brink of real starvation. On January 18, Moscow withdrew its ambassador from Helsinki, which in "diplomatic language" means the penultimate step before the start of the war. At least, this is how the then ambassador (in the future - the president of the country and a great friend of the USSR) Paasikivi assessed the situation: "The Soviet Union will not fail to use force against us if the problem is not resolved." Beginning at least in August 1940, the General Staff of the Red Army

developed operational plans, which clearly and directly set the task of the complete occupation of the entire territory of Finland (including the capital of the state - Helsinki), the complete defeat and destruction of the Finnish army. What is remarkable is that in the text of these "Considerations" and "Directives" there was no place even for formal reservations that invasion plans were being developed in case Finland violates the terms of the peace treaty or German troops appear on Finnish territory. And therefore, we do not have to look for and study some "secret files" in order to understand what was

the attitude of the people and government of Finland to the outbreak of war between Germany and the USSR. Thousands of curses and wishes for a speedy defeat sounded against the "great neighbor". However, emotions are emotions, and the question of Finland's actual entry into the war was much more serious. There was no public, open agreement between Finland and Germany. Finland did not join the Tripartite

pact and did not (unlike the USSR) negotiate such an accession. On the other hand, there is no doubt about the fact of secret military negotiations, as a result of which an agreement was reached on the passage of four German divisions through the Finnish Arctic to the Soviet border and the participation of one Finnish infantry division in a joint offensive with the Germans on Kandalaksha. In addition, Finland provided its airfields for basing German reconnaissance aircraft, and possibly itself participated in reconnaissance operations over and on the territory of the USSR. Thus, as of June 24, 1941, a situation

developed that, by and large, did not suit either the German or Finnish leadership. In Berlin, they believed that they received too little from Finland, the Wehrmacht command did not need the ritual participation of one Finnish division in an operation in a remote and insignificant theater, but a full-scale offensive by the Finnish army on Leningrad. A narrow circle of Finnish leaders who, behind the backs of the people and parliament, conducted secret negotiations with the Nazis and agreed to the participation of the Finnish army in the war on the side of Hitler (and in this case it does not matter - one division, ten divisions or one battalion), could not but understand that they have gone too far. Much further than is possible and acceptable in a democratic country, which was pre-war Finland. On June 20, President Risto Ryti met with the deputies of the Social Democratic

faction (85 seats in parliament out of 200) and assured them that Finnish troops would not be used to attack the Soviet Union. On the eve of this meeting, on June 19, the leader of the Social Democrats, one of the country's most influential politicians, Väinö Tanner (foreign minister during the "winter war"), at a meeting of trade union leaders, said: "Our troops will be used only for the defense of the country, but not for offensive operations ". And after that, the fact of the appearance of a group of thousands of German troops in northern Finland becomes known. The meeting of the Finnish parliament was scheduled for June 25 in advance, without any connection with the

Soviet bombing. At this meeting, the government had to give explanations, and the expected tough "debriefing" could well end in the resignation of the cabinet.

In such a situation, the bombing of Finnish cities by Soviet aircraft was a stunning gift for the hardliners. The gift was so valuable and so timely that the question inevitably arises: was this accident accidental? In other words, where - in Berlin or in Helsinki - was that notorious "secret telephone" from which disinformation came to Stalin's office about the relocation of the "best parts of the Luftwaffe" to southern Finland and the bombardment of Leningrad planned by the Germans.

Crushing failure

And in conclusion, a few words about the real results of "crushing blows on German airfields in Finland." The bomber units of the Air Force of the Northern Front, which were armed with at least 280 serviceable aircraft and more than 400 combat-ready crews, completed about 130 sorties on June 25, 1941. No more than 30 aircraft bombed (or at least tried to do so) on the airfields where the Finnish fighters were actually based. Not a single enemy aircraft was destroyed either on the ground or in the air. No

one flight.

There was no fighter cover for the bombers at all. As a result, 19 bombers were shot down by Finnish fighters. One SB was shot down during the return by Soviet fighters, another bomber was irretrievably lost in a mid-air collision between two aircraft. On June 26, the bomber units of the Air Force of the Northern Front limited themselves to single reconnaissance flights over Finnish territory, and this was the "first multi-day operation of Soviet aviation" for them that actually ended.

The Air Force of the Baltic Fleet acted more actively and effectively. True, these actions, even formally, had nothing to do with the "destruction of German aircraft at Finnish airfields".

Naval aviation bombers delivered quite powerful and organized (even with fighter cover!) strikes against naval bases and ships in the ports of the Gulf of Finland (Turku, Salo, Helsinki, Kotka). During June 25 and 26, about 140 bomber sorties were carried out, and raids on the port of Turku continued on June 27 and 28 (albeit on a smaller scale). As a result, the coastal part of the city was almost completely destroyed, port facilities and industrial enterprises were damaged. At the airfield near the city of Turku, one Finnish bomber was destroyed (by a strange twist of fate, it turned out to be a captured Soviet SB), several Finnish fighters were damaged in air battles. The irretrievable losses of the Baltic Fleet Air Force during the operation amounted to three aircraft.

Chapter

3 Disaster on the "Bialystok salient"

The defeat of the Western Front was the heaviest defeat of the Red Army in the first weeks of the Great Patriotic War. Hundreds of thousands of fighters and commanders, a huge amount of military equipment and equipment were lost in the encirclement between Bialystok and Minsk. The trophy documents of the enemy declassified only at the beginning of the 21st century (TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12462, d. 606, 625) allow us to look at this tragedy from a new, previously unknown side.

The Western Special Military District, on the basis of the command and troops of which the Western Front was deployed, was the second (after the Kyiv Special Military District) military district of the USSR in terms of numbers and combat power. In accordance with the pre-war plans of the high command of the Red Army, the following tasks were set for the troops of the Western Front: "By striking the left wing of the front in the general direction of Sedlec, Radom help the

Southwestern Front to break the Lublin Radom grouping of the enemy ... On the 3rd day of the operation, take Sedlec with moving parts and on the 5th day crossings on the river. Vistula (offensive to a depth of about 120 km - M. S.); the main forces on the 8th day to reach the river. The Vistula is ready to cross it. In the future, keep in mind actions on Radom (200 km south-west of Brest - MS) with the aim of completely encircling the enemy's Lublin grouping in cooperation with the Southwestern Front. To ensure the main blow of the front, deliver an auxiliary blow in the direction of Bialystok - Warsaw, with the task of capturing Warsaw and placing defenses on the river. Narew.

The stubborn defense of the armies of the right wing of the front in the sector of the river. Neman, Ostrolenka firmly cover the directions to Lida and Volkovysk - Baranovichi.

Unmobilized compounds

The war, which began on the morning of June 22, found the troops of the Western Front on the move, at a time when they did not have time to either complete the deployment of the planned offensive grouping or start building an impromptu defensive grouping. In the randomly formed "first echelon" of the front (3rd, 10th, 4th armies), there were 13 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions, 4 mechanized corps (that is, 8 tank and 4 motorized divisions). Another 11 rifle divisions were on the march, at a distance of 100 to 350 km from the border, with the task of reaching the deployment areas provided for by the plan by July 1. The two emerging mechanized corps (17th and 20th), located in the depths of the front formation (in the Baranovichi and Borisov regions, respectively), were "mechanized" only in name. Three armies (22nd, 20th, 21st) of the Second Strategic Echelon were deployed in the deep operational rear of the front on the line Vitebsk, Smolensk, Gomel. The concentration of these armies of the GC reserve was to be completed only by July 3–5. For an offensive in Belarus, the enemy concentrated Army Group Center (9th and 4th field

armies, 3rd and 2nd tank groups). It was the most powerful grouping of German troops, surpassing the other two Wehrmacht army groups on the Eastern Front (North and South) combined in the number of tanks and tank divisions. The outlines of the border and the road network suggested a quite obvious plan of operation: inflicting two powerful strikes by tank formations under the bases of the "Bialystok ledge" with the subsequent encirclement of the entire group of Soviet troops. The 2nd tank group under the command of Colonel General Heinz Guderian, after breaking through the front in the Brest region, was to advance in two directions: on Baranovichi - Minsk and Slutsk - Bobruisk. The 3rd tank group under the command of Colonel-General German Goth broke through the front north of Grodno (that is, in the defense zone of the Baltic Special Military District) and, after the capture of Vilnius, developed an offensive to the southeast, through Molodechno to Minsk.

As part of the Army Group "Center" there were 31 infantry, 9 tank, 1 cavalry and 7 "settlement" (including motorized units and formations of the Waffen-SS) motorized divisions. Formally speaking, the numerical superiority of the Wehrmacht was very

modest - 48 German divisions against 43 Soviet ones (two cavalry divisions of the Red Army are counted here as one "estimated division"). The advancing side (Wehrmacht) did not have a quantitative superiority in tanks either. So, in the four mechanized corps of the Western Front (excluding the emerging 17th and 20th MK, tank regiments of cavalry divisions and hundreds of light amphibious tanks as part of rifle divisions) there were 2345 tanks, and the tank divisions of the GA "Center" were armed with a total of 1936 tanks (to this number one should also add 28 ° CAU of various types as part of separate divisions of "assault guns" and self-propelled "tank destroyers"). However, it must be taken into account that the German troops were

completely mobilized, while it was not possible to complete the transfer of formations and units of the Red Army to wartime states as part of the covert mobilization that began in May 1941 under the guise of "Large training camps". The rifle divisions of the Western OVO, with a regular strength of 14.5 thousand people, had 10-12 thousand personnel each; motorized formations only after the announcement of open mobilization could be fully equipped with cars and tractors (artillery tractors). The planned terms for complete mobilization were 1–2 days for rifle divisions, 3–5 days for tank and motorized divisions.

Was the collapse inevitable?

In such a situation, the outcome of the defensive operation in Belorussia (if only military-operational considerations are taken into account, leaving aside everything else) was determined mainly by two factors. Firstly,

the ability of units and formations of the first operational echelon of the Western Front to delay, relying on natural (the rivers Bug, Biebrzha, Neman) and man-made (about 500 pillboxes of the Grodno, Osoverts, Zambrovsky and Brest fortified areas) defensive lines, the offensive of numerically superior enemy forces on 3-4 days. This would allow

to complete the main part of mobilization measures, to resupply the troops with personnel and vehicles, and also to significantly condense the defense by bringing 11 fresh rifle divisions of the "second echelon" to the front. Secondly, the ability of the

6th mechanized corps to deliver a powerful counterattack. This almost fully equipped mechanized corps was stationed in the Bialystok region (that is, in the very center of the "Bialystok ledge") and even before the start of hostilities received 1131 tanks (including 452 of the latest T-34 and KV), 294 tractors / tractors, 4779 vehicles and 1042 motorcycles. Probably the most promising would be the strike of the 6th MK in the direction of Warsaw, which was separated from the then western border of the USSR by less than 100 km along the highway. The headquarters of the GA "Center", the most important enemy logistics bases, and a large railway junction were located in Warsaw. Resolutely massaging forces in the directions of the main attack (at the bases of the "Bialystok ledge" in the region of Brest and Grodno), the German command inevitably weakened the center of its operational formation, where 10 infantry divisions extended "in a thread" covered a section of the border with a length of 150 km. According to all the canons of military science, such a "thread" could not withstand the concentrated attack of a thousand tanks.

Unfortunately, none of the tasks set by the front command was solved, the counterattack of the 6th and 11th mechanized corps was reduced to scattered and uncertain attempts to stop the advance of the German infantry in the area south of Grodno (Sidra, Kuznitsa, Indura), which the enemy assessed as "separate attacks (10-20 tanks each) of local importance. On the evening of June 25, the command of the Western Front ordered a general retreat to the Lida-Slonim-Pinsk line, but for the demoralized and already practically uncontrollable troops, this order only served as an impetus for the beginning of a disorderly retreat, and the columns stretching for tens of kilometers became a defenseless target for German aviation.

On June 27-28, the German "tank wedges" closed the encirclement near Minsk. According to Soviet historians, out of 44 divisions of the Western Front, 24 were completely defeated, the remaining 20 divisions lost from 30 to 90 percent of their forces and means. The final report of the headquarters of the GA "Center" states that in the Bialystok area -

Minsk was destroyed or captured 3188 tanks, 1830 guns, 338.5 thousand people were taken prisoner. Irrecoverable (killed and missing) losses of the enemy turned out to be 35–40 times less.

“The surprise at the border crossing was completely successful”

And now let's turn to the documents in which the German officers, subordinate to the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, recorded the results of each day of the campaign to the east that began so victoriously for the Wehrmacht.

June 22

The offensive is developing successfully. The enemy offers mostly weak resistance. It looks like he has been taken by surprise. Bridges across the Bug River: captured the bridge near Koden, the railway bridge near Brest and the Fronlov bridge. By 6:00 am, the advanced advancing units had advanced mainly to a depth of 4–5 km east of the Bug River. Drogichin is busy. In Brest, primarily in the fortress, resistance is intensifying...

47 AK (army corps - M.S.) crossed the Kremenets - Brest road. The captured prisoners of war are satisfied that they were captured. The mood of the Russian soldiers is bad ... The

general impression of the enemy is that resistance is still weak along the entire front of the 9th Army, light artillery is firing in places ...

The surprise at the border crossing was completely successful. From about 0900, enemy resistance began to partially intensify. In some areas, there is still only scattered resistance from a poorly controlled enemy ...

On this side of the Neman River, units of eight enemy divisions were installed, which were not fully prepared for defense and were literally dumbfounded by our offensive. The plans of the enemy have not yet been established ... At

the first contact of all the corps with the enemy, his resistance is insignificant. The Russians lead a weak artillery

fire...

The mood of the Russian soldiers is bad, in particular because of the poor food supply. The soldiers don't want to hear about

politics...

June 23

According to the report of Department 1-C of the headquarters of the 4th Army, the enemy did not change the method of warfare. With weak artillery actions, the enemy fights stubbornly and desperately in places. So far, there have been no reports of defectors or surrendered Russian soldiers. The number of prisoners is still small ... The enemy continues

to retreat, offering resistance hardly worthy of mention. The forward detachments of our tank units have crossed the state border and have already penetrated into enemy territory up to 100 km without encountering serious resistance ... The enemy continues to retreat in front of the 3rd tank group to the east and in the

direction of Vilnius and in some places is offering weak resistance ... Enemy resistance is only noted in the area of n. settlement (settlement. - ***M.S.***) Olita (Alytus. - ***M.S.***), where the

3rd tank group collided with the 5th TD (tank division. - ***M.S.***) of the Russians (to yesterday's message about 80 destroyed Russian tanks today, another 60 were added, thus, the total number of destroyed Russian tanks was 140) ...

The actions of the enemy took on a more planned character. In the Lomza sector, the withdrawal of the 8th, 2nd and 27th divisions to the line of the Biebrza River. The testimonies of the prisoners confirm that the enemy intends to hold this position ...

Russians often fight to the last, and in some cases, in order not to be captured, they prefer to shoot themselves (presumably on the orders of political officers). The enemy suffers heavy losses in manpower, the number of prisoners is insignificant ... The enemy's retreat was established on June

23 through Vilnius to the southeast, east and northeast. The destruction of bridges by the enemy was not found anywhere ...

June 24

Battle tactics. As expected, in most cases the enemy defends stubbornly and does not surrender even in the most hopeless situations. One gets the impression that the Russians were told that the Germans shoot every prisoner ...

In the first half of the day and at noon, the 20th AK was attacked by enemy tank units (this is the first report about the beginning of a counterattack by the 6th mechanized corps - M.S.). At n. Sidra settlement of the 162nd infantry division (infantry division - M.S.) was repulsed by an attack of tanks from the side of the settlement. Sokulka village, as a result of which 7 tanks were destroyed. An enemy tank formation (about 150 tanks) from the side of the n. Indura was attacked by the 256th Infantry Division. n. Forge. The fight is still going on...

Tank battles continue south and southwest of Grodno. The numbers of enemy tank formations have not yet been clarified. Maybe it's the 7th or 9th TD. The enemy is attacking the 256th infantry division in the direction of Kuznitsa and part of the 8th AK in the northern direction to Grodno ... Heavy fighting is going on near Varen

and west of Vilnius. About 1,500 people have been taken prisoner so far. In the region of Varena, Olita, Vilnius, 60 aircraft were captured, some of them were not damaged. At the moment, the actions of Russian aviation have not been noted. At the Varena station, a wagon with toxic agents (poisonous substances - M.S.) was seized. The data of their analysis will follow later ...

June

25th During the night The villages of Sidra and Dombrova were attacked from the west and south, presumably by the forces of two enemy divisions using tanks and cavalry. Yesterday's tank attacks on Kuznitsa and the area south of Grodno appear to have been completed. On the roads Indura - Ross and Indura - B. Berestovitsa large motorized columns are moving in an unknown direction ...

In the battles south of Grodno, 67 enemy tanks were destroyed, of which 20 were destroyed by batteries of self-propelled "assault guns", 20 by artillery and 27 by anti-aircraft guns. The data is preliminary, they are still being specified ...

South-west of Grodno on the Dombrov-Sidra-Kuznitsa line, enemy tank attacks continue from the south, south-west,

south and east directions. Data on the number of destroyed tanks has not yet been received ... The tank battles near

Grodno were not a major planned offensive, rather they were individual attacks (10-20 tanks each) of local importance. The counterattack was aimed at stopping the advance of the German troops on Indura. Sometimes people in civilian clothes were found in wrecked tanks. Abandoned tanks found in the forests...

From the testimonies of the Ukrainians who fled, it was found out that they thought that the Germans were shooting all the prisoners, and only German leaflets explained their mistake to them. The content of the leaflets is being actively discussed among Russian

soldiers... South of Voronovo, 200 Cossacks have crossed over to our side...

On

June 26, leaflets were found among defectors and prisoners as passes, which is the first visible result of the action of leaflets ... Undamaged tanks without crews

found in the forests

allow us to conclude that the crews are waiting in reliable

shelters of the moment for the attack (the German staff officers did not find another explanation for the presence of intact tanks abandoned by the crews. - **M.S.**) ... At

15.30, a 50-km column of equipment from all types of troops was discovered, moving in an easterly direction, from Bialystok to Volkovysk.

Enemy resistance was noted only on the left flank of the 4th Army southwest and south of Bialystok, as well as in the area of operations of the 2nd Panzer Group near Baranovichi. On June 26, there were no more attempts to break through the enemy troops on a large scale. A general trend towards retreat to the east was noted. Large columns are moving eastward along all the main roads from the Bialystok region ... The number of prisoners at the

moment reaches

approximately 18 thousand people ...

tragic ending

June 29

In some cases, the enemy still puts up stubborn and fierce resistance. Mainly tends to break through and retreat to the east. There is no single leadership of the operation to break through and withdraw ... A very large percentage of

Russian troops hid in a vast, incompletely combed area of forests, fields, swamps, etc. The fact that the Russians in most cases try to avoid capture by all possible means is facilitated by their fear to be immediately shot during captivity or to be subjected to bullying, as well as the ability to easily escape from the vast, boundless battlefield ...

June 30

In the course of completing the encirclement and combing the rear area, the enemy is still putting up desperate resistance. Artillery and enemy aircraft are inactive ...

The enemy in the Minsk area seems to be demoralized. It no longer offers any organized resistance, but nevertheless, in groups up to a regiment, strikes from time to time in order to release its encircled troops, sometimes with support tanks...

Yesterday, enemy attack aircraft repeatedly carried out raids to the command post of the 3rd Panzer Group, there are losses ...

The servicemen of the 17th Rifle Division (rifle division. - ***M.S.***) taken prisoner near the city of Lida testified that they were ordered to remove their insignia, buttonholes and, if possible, change into civilian clothes ... The testimonies of the prisoners allow us to

conclude that that the bulk of the political commissars in the army avoid captivity by fleeing during the battle (presumably in civilian clothes) ...

July 1

The Slonim-Volkovysk-Pruzhany region is cleared of the remnants of the enemy, who is putting up fierce but unorganized resistance. A lot of weapons fell into our hands (primarily

tools), equipment and horses. The Russians suffered huge losses in manpower, there were few prisoners ... On

the night of June 30 to July 1, stubborn battles continued only near Zelva; in other areas, the enemy offered little resistance, in part there are signs of his complete demoralization. The number of prisoners and trophies is increasing. Their total number is still difficult to establish. Distribution of leaflets is expedient and further. There are many cases of joyful meeting by the population of our troops ...

In previous battles, the main forces of the Russian army, operating in front of the front of the army group, were destroyed. With disproportionately large enemy losses in manpower, the number of prisoners, according to preliminary data, exceeded 90 thousand people. To date, there are 1,800 captured or destroyed tanks, 1,000 captured guns, and a huge number of other trophies.

July 3

In the battles to destroy the enemy in the Bialystok-Volkovysk region, 116 thousand prisoners of war, 1505 guns, 1964 tanks, 327 aircraft have been taken prisoner, destroyed or captured. Their number is increasing. Other trophies are not accountable. According to incomplete data, the losses of the 4th, 9th armies and the 3rd tank group are: 221 officers and 2655 soldiers were killed, 389 officers and 7125 soldiers were wounded, 20 officers and 945 soldiers were missing ...

July 4

The enemy in Nalibokskaya Pushcha no longer had the strength to offer noticeable resistance, and from July 3 he began to go over to our side in ever increasing numbers. Captives and defectors testify that the troops were left without food and demoralized. Only where the commissars are left do they decide to resist...

July 5

Number of prisoners in the army group's zone of action until July 4 reached 217 thousand inclusive and is increasing more and more ...

Chapter

4 Southwestern Front. disaster in numbers

During the first 20 days of the war, the Wehrmacht infantry passed 250 kilometers from the border to the Sluch River (judging by the map of the German General Staff, by the evening of July 10, at the turn of the Sluch River or east of it, there were 299th, 298th 44th, 111th, 75 -I, 57th, 9th and 297th Infantry Divisions), and the tanks went even further to the east.

Such a pace was in no way inferior to what Soviet historiography called "the triumphal march of German troops across France." And in September 1939, during the so-called liberation campaign, the Red Army occupied the eastern provinces of Poland (later called Western Ukraine) a little faster, and this despite the fact that the Polish army by that time was already in

state of agony.

The price of victory

What price did the Wehrmacht pay for a success of this magnitude?

First of all, it is worth noting the stunning numbers of losses of anti-tank guns in the formations of the 1st Tank Group (recall that these are not only tank and motorized, but also infantry divisions attached to tank corps at the initial stage of the operation). During the long 42 days of the war, during the time when the Southwestern Front lost more than four thousand tanks, the Germans lost only 105 anti-tank guns. The last two lines of the table deserve special attention. One side of the

armed confrontation is losing hundreds of "new types" tanks, while the other side is losing only 18 guns, theoretically capable of penetrating the armor of the KV or T-34. Here it is also necessary to take into account that the table shows the losses on August 3, and the tanks in the tank units of the South-Western Front "ended" in quantities worthy of mention three or four weeks earlier; accordingly, some (hardly anyone

then he will be able to give exact numbers) some of these guns were lost already without any interaction with the tanks of the Red Army.

Of course, not only the artillerymen of the divisions of the 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht fired at Soviet tanks. Some comrades argue that the heavy Soviet tanks were destroyed mainly by the fire of 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and the elite anti-aircraft regiment "Hermann Goering" was used for these purposes in the offensive zone of Army Group South. Alas, the loss of personnel of this unit casts doubt on the fact that German anti-aircraft gunners even saw more than a dozen KV tanks. As of July 2, the losses amounted to five people killed and 21 wounded, by July 16, the losses of the regiment rose to 10 killed and 35 wounded. At the same time, one should not forget that no one released anti-aircraft gunners from their direct duties, and Soviet planes bombed and fired at them with far from inflatable balls ...

The unusually high (by the standards of the Wehrmacht) losses of the tank divisions of the 48th TK is a completely understandable result of the battle near Dubno, near Ostrog (where the 11th TD almost completely alone, under a hail of Soviet aviation strikes, fought against the 109th MD, 213- th MD and the tank regiment of the 57th TD) and near Berdichev, where fresh 16th mechanized corps and 3rd PTABR were on the way of German tanks, which had not previously participated in the battles. The relatively low losses of the formations of the 14th TK (9th TD and the Viking SS motorized division) are just as easily explained - the corps was brought into battle six to seven days later

and advanced south of the main battle area. The reason for the relatively low losses of the motorized divisions of the 48th and 3rd tank corps (16th MD and 25th MD) is not so obvious. These divisions invariably advanced in the second echelon of their corps, lagging behind the advanced tank divisions by one or two days and by 20-40 kilometers on the ground; apparently, even this difference was enough to make their losses half as much. If such an assumption is correct, then it suggests that even in those cases when the Germans ran into the resistance of units of the Red Army, this resistance did not last long and the collection of prisoners and trophies remained for the share of second-echelon divisions.

The losses of the infantry divisions attached to the tank corps were on the whole even lower. So, by July 2, the 57th Infantry Division lost 211 people (54 killed, 157 wounded), the 44th Infantry Division lost only 104 people. High (by Wehrmacht standards) losses are found only in the 298th Infantry Division - 520 people, it can be assumed that this is the result of a meeting with the 131st Motorized Division at the turn of the Styr River north of Lutsk.

In general and on average, the division of the 1st Tank Group in the battles of the first three weeks of the war lost 60 people a day. Over a twice longer time period, for 42 days of the war (until August 3), the 1st TGr lost 16,584 people (5,029 killed and missing, 11,555 wounded), that is, about 45 per division per day.

Judging by the entry in Halder's diary dated August 2, the losses of the entire Army Group South (including the formations of the 11th Army, which entered the battle from July 2) amounted to 63 thousand people, which, in terms of the number of divisions, gives even slightly less (32– 37 people) figures for average daily losses. The absolute maximum was most likely the losses of the 68th Infantry Division, which in three days of fighting (June 24-26) with the tanks of the 4th mechanized corps near Krakovets, Yavorov lost 547 people killed and wounded (182 per day).

The final conclusion is beyond doubt: 35, and 45, and 60, and even 180 people per division per day - this is the level of losses at which the question of "fierce battles and fierce resistance of the Red Army" can be considered closed.

Tanks don't burn

The irretrievable losses of German tanks were exceptionally low. By July 5, the 1st Panzer Group had lost only 85 tanks, and this number included 11 Pz-I tankettes. In the future, the rate of increase in losses even decreased, and by August 3, the total irretrievable losses of German tanks (including Pz-I and the so-called commanders) amounted to 156 pieces. Comparing these figures with the losses of personnel, we see that in the tank divisions of the Wehrmacht, for one irretrievably lost tank, there were 60-70 killed and wounded people. Even if you share this

figure by four (assuming that the losses of the personnel of the tank regiment were about one-fourth of the losses of the division), then the losses of tankers in the belligerent army will still be an order of magnitude greater than the losses of tanks.

The Germans took care of their small tanks, so each division had a large (exceeding irretrievable losses) number of tanks temporarily out of order and under repair. In mid-July, the specific loss pattern is shown in Table 3.

Taken together in a single table, these figures clearly show that in divisions involved in fierce battles (11th TD, 16th TD), irretrievable losses are approximately equal to the number of tanks temporarily out of action. On the contrary, where they marched more than they fought (9th TD), there are significantly more tanks in repair than irretrievably lost ones. This fact gives grounds to assume that temporarily out of order tanks are not only (and not so much) knocked out, but not finished off by enemy fire, but also mediocly broken down for technical reasons.

It is worth recalling here that without exception, all German tanks ran on gasoline, and the calibers of Soviet anti-tank guns started at 45 mm; the German tank that actually received a shell in the side had a great chance of catching fire; a burnt tank cannot be repaired (heating causes the so-called tempering of armored steel, after which the remains of the tank are suitable only for remelting).

"A lot" and "little" are relative terms. If we recall that by the beginning of the war, the troops of the Kiev OVO were armed with 1900 anti-tank 45-mm guns, 870 divisional 76-mm guns, 1140 anti-aircraft guns of 76 mm and 88 mm caliber (and this is not counting 4.5 thousand 45- and 76-mm cannons in the turrets of tanks and armored vehicles), then against this background, the losses of Wehrmacht tanks are negligible. In relation to the initial number of tanks of the 1st TGr (728 units), the losses turned out to be very large, and already in mid-July a little more than half of the initial number of tanks was in good condition. In fact, the tank formations of the Wehrmacht turned into a motorized infantry division, reinforced by a battalion of tanks.

The cost of defeat

Now let's look at the situation from the other side of the front. One of the many fundamental differences between the USSR and France or Poland was the geography of a completely different scale, and on this scale, the loss of a "slot of land" measuring 250 by 250 kilometers (which is larger than the area of the territory of countries such as Belgium, Holland, Denmark or Switzerland) didn't pose much of a problem. The misfortune, the real irreversible misfortune, was the loss of the army that was in this territory. What was managed to be withdrawn beyond the line of fortified areas on the "old border" was only scattered remnants of the troops of the Kiev OVO, which, as of the morning of June 22, was not inferior in number and armament to the armies of the largest European powers. A document

has been preserved that makes it possible to present the losses of the troops of the front in concrete numbers. At the headquarters of the South-Western Front, a certificate was prepared "Information on formations and individual units that are part of the armies of the front as of 15.7.41." The certificate contains data on the number of personnel for 28 divisions (of all types). The arithmetic mean is 4,086, which at first glance suggests that the casualties amounted to "only" 60 percent of the original strength.

Alas, this is a crafty figure, reminiscent of the notorious "average temperature in the hospital." For a more realistic assessment, it should, firstly, be taken into account that the list contains three divisions of the 12th Army (44th and 192nd Guards Rifle Division and 240th Guards Rifle Division), which were hundreds of kilometers from the battlefield and were practically inactive ; it is enough to remove them from the general list, as the average number of front

divisions drops to 3317 people. But that's not all. Regarding the 15 rifle divisions, the compilers of the certificate were forced to limit themselves to the short "no reports", which in the real situation of the summer of 1941 did not give grounds for optimism; this list included, for example, the 124th SD, which later emerged from the encirclement of 1.5 thousand people, and the 228th SD, defeated in several days of fighting near Mlynov and Dubno. Three rifle divisions of the 6th Army (the heroic 41st and the 97th and 159th, which melted in the first days of the war in the Lvov direc

appear at all, there is no information in the certificate and data on six divisions of the 8th and 15th mechanized corps. It is clear that if the figures of the remnants of the personnel of these formations were taken into account in the certificate, then the average number of front divisions would be significantly less than three thousand.

Reasonable doubts are caused by the reliability of the data themselves included in the certificate. Here, for example, is the 135th Infantry Division (5th Army), which was defeated on June 24 in the very first battle near Voinitsa and later occasionally appears in documents only in the context of "parts of the division randomly retreated." As Vladimirovsky writes (and he writes not from memory, but with reference to the primary document stored in TsAMO), by June 30, "only 1511 people remained in the 135th rifle division, along with the 16th rifle regiment of the 87th division." Two weeks later, there could only be fewer people in the division, however, in the certificate of the headquarters of the South-Western Front in the line of the 135th rifle division there is the figure 3335. It is alleged that there were still 56 guns in the 135th rifle division, but it is very difficult to believe that the division, which lost more than 80 percent of the personnel, retained half of the artillery pieces. According to the compilers of the certificate, by July 15, 33 guns still remained in the 81st Motorized Division (4th MK). Where

does this "abundance" come from? The artillery regiment of the division was defeated and all its materiel was lost on June 25 in the battle near Krakovets, Yavorov. Opersvodka No. 010 of the headquarters of the 81st MD, compiled on July 8, after the remnants of the division were withdrawn to the rear, has been preserved. In accordance with this document, there were no cannons at all in the 202nd MRR, in the 323rd MRR there were two 76-millimeter cannons left, in the artillery regiment of the division "up to 20% of the personnel, there is no artillery, except for rifles, there is no weapons", information as of the anti-tank division, no. Further, it is reported that a "consolidated battalion" was formed from the remnants of the 202nd and 323rd regiments, however, in the certificate, the number of the 81st MD is indicated in the amount of 3287 people. Too much for a battalion...

Precise information about the losses of the Southwestern Front, most likely, will never be named; The available primary documents suggest that by July 10 no less than 70-80 percent of the personnel had been lost in the divisions that found themselves in the enemy offensive zone. In total, this means the loss of 300-350 thousand people, which is ten times more than the losses of the enemy.

The facts force us to reconsider the opinion that has been established in Russian historiography that in the first weeks of the war on the Southwestern Front, unlike the neighboring Western Front, everything was not so bad, the encirclement catastrophe was avoided, and the troops were withdrawn to the east in a more or less organized manner. Alas, to the east, beyond the line of the "old border", the remnants of the troops were withdrawn, in which the division turned into a badly battered rifle regiment.

Like dew at dawn

From the mechanized formations of the Southwestern Front - the largest and most powerful in the entire Red Army - there were numbers and the name "Tank Division". In a completely official statistical collection, "Secrecy has been removed. Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR" it is reported that by July 6 the Southwestern Front had irretrievably lost 4381 tanks. 50 times more enemy losses. Of course, the claimed attempt to establish Soviet losses to within a single tank can hardly be taken seriously, but the overall order of magnitude is beyond doubt: the tanks were almost completely lost (over 90%). With regard to many divisions that found themselves in the epicenter of the battle in Western Ukraine, the "almost" clause can be completely removed. Available documents allow in some cases to "tweak the sharpness" and

consider the process of the disappearance of mighty mechanized corps in detail. Let's start with the 37th Panzer Division (15th MK), after which there was a report with a detailed list of personnel losses. So, 103 people were killed, 280 were wounded. The numbers are very modest, in any division of the Wehrmacht that fought from June 22, there were much more killed and wounded. But the list of losses of the 37th Panzer Division does not end with these figures, it is just beginning.

653 people "disappeared". 2040 people left with the cryptic wording "for other reasons." Is it all losses? No, not yet. Approximately 2.5 thousand people disappeared without any explanation. Simple arithmetic leads us to this conclusion: by the beginning of the war, the division had (judging by the August report of the command) 9775 people, and by July 12 in the area

concentration near the city of Piryatin (this is already beyond the Dnieper) 2423 people came out. According to the August report of the command of the 15th MK, even less - only 2021 people.

This is how the "pyramid" of irretrievable losses turns out: 103, 653, 4500. Killed, "missing", disappeared. By a strange coincidence of arithmetic circumstances, the number of those killed is exactly 50 times less than the number of "missing".

It is worth paying attention to the amazing ratio of losses of tanks and tankers. Only six tanks (one T-34 and five T-26) out of 312, which were considered serviceable by the beginning of the war, came out to Piryatin. But at the same time, the losses of the personnel of the two tank regiments of the division taken into account (we emphasize this word with three lines) amount to only 112 people (50 killed, 62 wounded). But maybe this is such a unique, extremely disorganized division? Let's continue the boring work with numbers and turn to the documents of the division, which is really unique. The 34th Panzer

Division of Colonel Vasilyev actually fought for five whole days (from June 26 to 30), in the last of these days the enemy was outnumbered many times over, the 34th Panzer created such problems for the Germans that they were reflected in the documents of the Wehrmacht high command; many primary documents remained from this division, including the Journal of Combat Actions, compiled directly in the course of these actions. The division is undoubtedly unique, the best of the best. In the August report on the combat operations of the division, the following numbers of personnel losses are given: 209 killed, 456 wounded and sick, 4388 missing

lead.

Alas, even in this heroic division, there are 20 times more missing than those killed. However, here, too, the arithmetic of losses categorically "does not converge" - judging by the balance of the initial and final presence of personnel, in addition to the clearly recorded "missing", it is not known where several thousand more people disappeared. And in this division, the number of lost tanks (275 units, not counting the faulty ones, not counting all the heavy five-tower giants T-35) significantly exceeds the counted number of killed and wounded in two tank regiments (136 people in total).

"Tanks rushed, shaking the ground ..."

Now let's turn to the documents of the mighty 4th mechanized corps of Vlasov. With an insignificant result, having fought on the "Lviv ledge", the corps began a swift march to the east. On June 29, Lvov was left, on July 3 the mechanized corps was already in Zbarazh (135 kilometers east of Lviv), the morning of July 9 found the 4th MK in the area of the town of Ivanopol (180 kilometers from Zbarazh). Finally, on July 12, the remnants of the most powerful tank formation in the Red Army crossed the Kyiv bridges across the Dnieper and concentrated in the Priluki area (650 kilometers east of the border). In fact, there was no single and controlled mechanized corps for a long time, since during the withdrawal, individual divisions of the corps divisions were united, separated, transferred to other parts of the front, etc.

Judging by the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, the losses of this division, which was armed with a record number of "new types" tanks (49 KV and 173 T-34), were as follows. A total of 269 tanks were lost: 37 KV, 146 T-34, 28 BT-7, 58 T-26. Where, when and under what circumstances such a mountain of the latest military equipment was lost is impossible to understand. In the June battles, judging by the same report, the division lost 34 tanks (15 in the counterattack near Yavorov, eight during the withdrawal to Lvov, 11 tanks allegedly lost two battalions sent to Radzekhuv). The only episode related to the combat losses of tanks during the retreat to the east is described in the report as follows: "On 10.7.41, a group of tanks under

Captain Karpov (10 tanks and 2 armored vehicles) concentrated in the Beizymovka area and attacked the enemy in the direction of Olshanka at 20:00, but, not supported by infantry, withdrew at 23:00 and took up defensive positions 300–400 m south of Olshanka. During the next day, the group fought an unbearable battle in the same area and, as a result of the flight from the front of the 32nd motorized rifle regiment, was destroyed and left on the battlefield, for

except for one tank.

In total, 43 tanks lost in battle are recruited. It can be assumed that several more pieces were lost in skirmishes with the enemy, which the compilers of the report forgot to mention. The division transferred 10 tanks on July 3 to another unit, which is described in the report with a completely untranslatable phrase: "The commander of the 37th rifle

Corps on behalf of the Military Council (which Armed Forces? Front? Army?) were detained and left to reinforce the 32nd separate anti-aircraft artillery division (what is this?) 10 tanks under the command of Captain Yegorov. Be that as it may, the loss of about 200 tanks does not have any explanation in the report.

The losses of the personnel of the 32nd Panzer Division are indicated twice and in different ways. The text of the report itself says: "The division lost 103 people killed and 259 people wounded." However, in the appendix to the report ("information on the losses of units of the 32nd TD for the period from June 22 to July 30. 41"), large numbers are given: a total of 495 people were lost (139 killed, 356 wounded), including 191 in two tank regiments people (64 killed, 127 wounded). Losses are approximately the same order as in the divisions mentioned above, the losses of the personnel of tank regiments are also less than the number of lost tanks. Most importantly, the data given in the report on the number of killed and wounded are ten times less than the actual losses of the division. The division entered the war with 9,337 men, and by July 15, according to the information of the front headquarters, only 736 men remained in it. Where are the other eight thousand people?

The second tank division of the 4th MK was equipped with the latest tanks a little worse - the 8th TD was armed with 50 KV and 140 T-34s (as well as 122 serviceable tanks of the "old types"). I was not able to establish the exact number of personnel of the division from the revealed documents, but, knowing the total number of people in the mechanized corps (33,734 people), it can be assumed that there were at least 9.5-10 thousand people in the division. By July 13, the state of the 8th TD in the Journal of Combat Operations (ZhBD) was described as follows: "The division (9 tanks, 600 SMEs) is on the defensive on the wide front Andrushevka, Mal. Klitenka, Kropivna ... "Before that, judging by the records in the same ZhBD, the division lost 50 tanks in the June battles (including the loss of the" consolidated tank regiment "transferred to the operational subordination of the commander of the 15th mechanized corps). Nine more tanks were lost during the withdrawal. Where is everyone else?

Indestructible gaziki

The report on the combat operations of the 8th Panzer Division is accompanied by the "Statement of the availability of combat and auxiliary vehicles." This document is remarkable in that it reveals the incredible survivability of the indestructible Soviet trucks. By August 1, the division had three tanks left out of 312 that were considered serviceable as of June 22. Lost 99 percent of the tanks. But out of 572 ZIS-5 trucks, 317 pieces survived, out of 360 cargo trucks, 139 survived. Yes, and passenger cars turned out to be invulnerable - out of 23, 17 survived.

Such interesting proportions could be understood in a situation where tanks are lost during many days of fierce battles; in this case, the loss of trucks of the tank division, which, although they are not far from the battlefield, but still do not go to the very front line, could be less. But the 8th Panzer lost its tanks during multi-day marches. As modern Russian historians explain to us, from the strikes of the ubiquitous and all-destroying German aviation. What kind of bombings are these, under which diesel (!) Tanks, covered with armor impenetrable to fragments, burn like candles, and miserable plywood gas trucks with gasoline engines go on and on and on? Against the background of such "order in the tank units", the

report on the losses of personnel of the 8th TD already looks quite ordinary. In the division, which by July 13 had become an incomplete battalion, only the following losses were taken into account (as of July 30): 306 killed, 696 wounded, 1,033 missing. The absence of another 6-6.5 thousand people is not explained in any way. Another "old" personnel division, which received a fair amount of

"new types" tanks (63 KV and 38 T-34) before the start of the war, is the 10th Panzer. The division went beyond the Dnieper, having in its composition 4650 people (according to the report of the command of the 15th MK) or even 5253 (according to the report of the division command). This is an absolute "record" among all tank divisions of the Southwestern Front. Here, however, it is

appropriate to recall the aphorism about "half-empty or half-full glass." The 10th TD lost half of its personnel - is it very little or very much? No less relevant is the question of where these five thousand people were, if on July 7 from all parts of the division it was possible to assemble "a combined infantry battalion from the 10th SME, a company of tanks

from the 20th TP, a combined artillery battalion consisting of 3 152-mm guns and 2 122-mm guns, a reconnaissance company consisting of 6 armored vehicles and 2 BT tanks, a communications platoon and 2 5-AK radios.

Loss arithmetic traditionally "does not converge". The August report of the division command gives the following figures: 210 killed, 587 wounded. There is no simple and honest column "missing in action", it has been replaced by such polysyllabic constructions as "did not return from the battlefield when attacking and when leaving the battle", "lagged behind on the march", "did not leave the battle when surrounded by the enemy"; in total, 2,145 people left on these grounds. About 1.5 thousand more (and this is if you believe that 5 thousand went beyond the Dnieper to Piryatin) are absent without explanation. In the June battles at Radzekhuv and Lopatin, the 10th TD lost (more precisely, these losses are mentioned in the reports

of the division and mechanized corps command) exactly 60 tanks, including 14 KV and 7 T-34s. After that, there was a continuous retreat to the east, but by the morning of July 6, only 20 tanks remained in the division (including two KVs and three T-34s). About 250 tanks, including 47 invincible KVs and 28 T-34s, were lost no one knows where and how. Everything went much better with cars: 648 units left the Dnieper (more than half of the original number of vehicles).

No questions

The final conclusion from this sea of numbers is obvious: the combat (directly related to the enemy's influence) losses of the Southwestern Front are many times less than the losses from overt and covert desertion. The fat herds of Soviet/Russian scientists, who had been grazing in the field of studying the history of the Great Patriotic War for half a century, did not see these figures point-blank. It is understandable - "historians" had to tell stories about "mass heroism unparalleled in history." Another thing is much more important - did the high command of the Red Army understand the meaning of what happened? Today, on the basis of the identified documents, we can give a very specific answer to this question - even as we understand it!

There is a piece of paper in the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (TsAMO, f. 38, op. 11360, d. 5, l. 35). On it is a typewritten table with figures of the initial number and loss of tanks and vehicles of the 2nd and 18th mechanized corps of the Southern Front. Quite typical figures: the tanks were gone, the cars remained. These figures are underlined by someone's hand, and at the bottom of the sheet it is written in a round, clear handwriting: "It is clear that they did not lead the rear, they succumbed to panic and draped, leaving the hulls without used supplies and fuel and lubricants."

The assistant to the commander of the South-Western Front, Major General of the Tank Forces Volsky, also tried to clarify

the situation: "The loss figures in the statement are shown purely indicative. The material has been collected, there are acts for each machine of irretrievable losses, but the final answer can only be submitted after reviewing the acts, conducting an additional investigation, which should reveal the true causes and number of irretrievable losses ... I ask for the second time to send commissions to review the materials on the spot and establish the causes of irretrievable losses material part..."

"Now I pay exceptional attention to finding out why so much materiel was lost, under what circumstances the materiel was left and how much of it. Apparently, someone will have to be brought to justice, who left the materiel out of confusion, so that it would be discourteous for the future ... "" It has been established

that the drivers (the word "some" is written by hand - M.S.) of the BT and T- **26** vehicles tend to ruin the car and not go into battle. These are individuals, but nonetheless they exist. The struggle is simple: on trial and execution, but it is very difficult to establish the fact of damage. There were cases when a number of vehicles went into the forest, defended in the forest with reference to a malfunction, and after the battle they left. In this matter, the political apparatus and the Special Department must work hard..." "In this matter" there could be exactly two options.

Or condescendingly wave your hand, saying something like "for one beaten they give two unbeaten." Or call everything that happened in the first days of the war "treason", "sabotage", "complicity with the enemy" and punish accordingly. It was impossible to get off with a severe reprimand in a situation where for one killed in battle there are 50 disappeared,

when the tanks break down in one piece, and the cars are rapidly rushing east. Only one person could choose one of the two, and everyone knew his name.

Stalin thought about it and made a decision in mid-July. "So that it would be repulsive for the future" they arrested (and subsequently shot) a large group of the highest command staff of the Western Front, headed by General of the Army Pavlov. The Leader forgave all the other commanders - he had no other generals for this war.

Chapter

5 Failed everything that could be failed

We say: "Stalin", we mean - "Victory"; we say: "Victory", we mean - "Stalin". Alas, this is not an exaggeration. In December 2009, I had the imprudence to be a participant in a talk show on the NTV channel, dedicated to the next anniversary of the "great leader". The opinions of the participants, as expected, were polarized, but even those who pretty much dislike Comrade Stalin began with the words: "Yes, of course, the name of Stalin is inextricably linked with our Great Victory ..."

About true statesmanship

What can be objected to this? Nothing. Just as from the units of the Kalashnikov assault rifle laid out on the table, it is impossible to assemble anything other than a machine gun. Within the framework of that logic, that picture of the world in which, on June 22, 1941, some kind of natural disaster occurred - like a devastating earthquake or the fall of the Tunguska meteorite, and as a result of force majeure circumstances created by this natural disaster, the army of foreign invaders suddenly found itself off the banks of the Volkhov, Volga and Terek, Comrade Stalin appears as the true savior of the Fatherland. Against this background, the babbling about the "price of victory" looks truly miserable and pitiful. Expensive? Would defeat

be cheaper? Everything changes if you make some intellectual effort and remember that the history of the world, Europe, Russia, the USSR and the history of World War II itself did not begin on June 22, 1941, but much earlier. And absolutely nothing remains of the habitually repeated nonsense, one has only to ask oneself a simple question: "Since when did the wisdom of a state leader begin to be measured by the ability to expel the enemy from his native land?" With a very, very big stretch, in this way it is possible to designate the task of a military leader - however, both the charter and common sense suggest

that the armed forces must prevent a possible invasion and defeat the enemy on his territory, by no means allowing the transformation of his own country into a continuous ashes.

“War is bad business. Even the victor has to bear such huge costs before, during and after the war that it becomes much cheaper to achieve their goals in peacetime. I will not embarrass the reader by indicating the author of these words, in any case it is difficult to disagree with them. The state, government, political leader are obliged to ensure the security of the country, the inviolability of its borders, peace and tranquility for their citizens. In the ability to solve this problem by peaceful means, without shooting and shedding blood, true state wisdom is manifested. From such positions, it

becomes obvious that the European leaders of the 1930s - all without exception, not only Stalin - did not cope with their primary duty. In this sense, they all deserve a fat "deuce". The only difference is that no one in modern France or England would ever think of declaring Deladier or Chamberlain a national hero - these names have become a symbol of national shame. However, both “twos” and mistakes are different, it would be unacceptable hypocrisy to say that the leaders of the democratic countries of the West and Stalin bear equal responsibility for the outbreak of a pan-European (and then world) war. Deladier and Chamberlain sought to keep the peace in Europe. In September 1938, in Munich, they

undertook a stupid (because concessions only whetted Hitler's appetite), cowardly (possessing considerable military power, they could dictate their terms, and not agree to the brazen demands of the Nazis) and vile (they were going to pay with the territory and security of Czechoslovakia) an attempt to prevent the outbreak of war. In less than a year, their stupidity and cowardice were "rewarded" at their true worth. “Mistakes” (in this case, quotes would be quite appropriate) of Stalin were of a completely different nature. Strictly speaking, Stalin just got his way - he strove for war with all his might, pushed it as best he could, and a big war broke out in Europe.

The myth of the "enemy environment"

A well-known psychological phenomenon is that an event that has occurred begins to be perceived as the only possible one. We know that the Second World War took place, this knowledge extremely interferes with the understanding that at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s such a war could have seemed something completely impossible. Who and with whom was to fight? Who, in particular, could threaten the Soviet Union? In the center of Europe was Germany, devastated by war and defeat, under the terms of the Treaty of

Versailles, she was forbidden to have military aircraft, tanks, heavy artillery, and a submarine fleet. The number of formations in the ground forces was limited to 10 divisions (in terms of numbers rather corresponding to what is called an "infantry brigade"), which could not be armed with artillery of a caliber of more than 105 mm. Even the number of shells per gun was limited to 1000 rounds. Such an "army" was capable of solving only the tasks of suppressing internal unrest, but in a war with an external enemy, it would have to capitulate in 10-15 days, if only because of the complete consumption of ammunition. To the west of Germany (that is, even further from the USSR) was France, which was severely traumatized psychologically. The huge sacrifices suffered by the French army during the First World War formed persistent pacifist sentiments in society ("never again"), the country's military budget was spent mainly on the construction of the "great French wall" (a chain of

fortified areas of the Maginot line). The military strategy of Great Britain was still based on the idea of using the "noose" of the naval blockade. With regard to Germany, which imported food, half of the iron ore consumed, almost all oil and non-ferrous metal ore, this was an effective instrument of pressure; for the Soviet Union, with its colossal raw material resources, overseas imports were never critical.

The immediate neighbors of the USSR in the west were four states: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania. The only potential military adversary worth mentioning

could be considered only the newly-minted Second Rzeczpospolita. However, the army of this country, five times inferior to the Soviet Union in terms of population, torn apart by an acute interethnic conflict, by the mid-30s was hopelessly inferior in terms of its military potential to the Red Army.

This is the reality of the situation with the "enemy encirclement" and "rattling international imperialism." Was it easy in such a situation to kindle the fire of a European war? But the Bolsheviks did not look for easy ways ...

Open secret

In 1932 (Hitler was still only shouting at rallies), the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, the future Marshal Alexander Yegorov, prepared a report in which, among other things, the task was to ensure the deployment of the Soviet Air Force in the composition of 32 thousand aircraft, including 8 thousand heavy and 9.5 thousand light bombers. What is this for? For defense against a hypothetically possible coalition of France, Poland and Romania, which at that moment were not armed with even one-twentieth of such an enchanting fleet of bombers? At a time when the "French imperialists" were burying the military budget in underground concrete casemates, and the German Reichswehr was conducting field exercises with plywood models of tanks, the theory of a "deep offensive operation" was being developed in the Soviet headquarters. And not only theory, a tool corresponding to this task was created - tank troops colossal in number.

Already in 1932, the instruction "Drive into battle independent mechanized formations" was adopted, and by the end of 1935, the Red Army had 4 mechanized corps and 18 separate tank brigades. In the following year, 1936, the number of tank brigades grew to 30. And, of course, they were armed not with plywood models. As of January 1, 1934, the Soviet tank fleet was 7574 vehicles. Three years later, by January 1, 1937, the peaceful creative labor of the Soviet people increased the number of tanks in

Red Army up to 17,280 units. Even after the leading European powers came to their senses from the "pacifist hibernation", in the summer of 1939 the Red Army in terms of the number of tanks (and this is not counting the T-27 machine-gun tankettes and light amphibious T-37/38 tanks) was twice as large as the armies of Germany

and France and England combined. Strictly speaking, these grandiose military preparations by the USSR alone became a factor dangerously destabilizing the situation in Europe. And if only "these alone"... Convulsions of military psychosis, clearly visible even from a long distance, shook the Land of Soviets. No "cloaks and daggers," no "secret packages" were required by the governments of the West in order to hear the words of a cheerful Red Army song: "We are kindling the fire of the world / We will raze the Church and raze prisons to the ground." Ordinary newsstands sold the magazine Krasnaya Nov (No. 1, 1921), in which the future chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, Mikhail Frunze, wrote: "The boundaries of a possible future front in the near future are determined by the boundaries of the entire continent of the Old World." From the podium of the Mausoleum, People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Kliment Voroshilov declared to the whole world: "The Soviet people not only know how, but, one might say, loves to fight." For a few tens of kopecks, any spy could buy a movie ticket and enjoy watching the Soviet film "The Great Citizen", the main character of which (its prototype was Sergei Kirov) says: "Twenty years later, after a good war, go out and look at the Soviet Union of republics from thirty, forty ... "And absolutely free of charge everyone could look at the Soviet coat of arms, in the image of which the har

Without hiding at all, on the contrary, loudly declaring that "the world proletarian headquarters is in Moscow", the Comintern worked, the Communist Parties operating in many European countries quite legally, frankly called themselves "sections" of this supranational organization. Finally, rumors that came from the east about mass extrajudicial repressions, concentration camps, famine, executions and torture caused genuine fear among the Western man. No, of course, serious positive people (especially from among the so-called progressive intelligentsia) could not believe in the reality of such horrors, but these "rumors" created a certain mood. The same mood

which the leading political leaders of the West were caught in a trap between an almost physical disgust for Hitler and the Nazis, on the one hand, and a desire to create at least some kind of barrier to Stalin's inevitable offensive, on the other.

genius manipulator

It is possible and necessary to discuss the question of the extent to which the directives of the Comintern (that is, the orders of Stalin), which directed the German Communist Party to fight against the Social Democrats, paved the way for Hitler to power. A lot remains unclear in the history of the "Kandelaki mission", that is, the first attempt made in 1936 - early 1937 to conclude a political alliance with Nazi Germany, and Moscow's position during the "Munich crisis" in the fall of 1938 was by no means unambiguous. In any case, no matter at what point in history Stalin made his final bet on Hitler, the "Kremlin highlander" fully appreciated the opportunities that opened up after an aggressive paranoid seized absolute power in Germany. Assessed and used

in full.

A lot has already been written and said about the events of the summer of 1939 (fortunately, last year was also an "anniversary year"). The final conclusion is not in doubt - it is difficult to find an example of another, equally large-scale, rapid and stunning success in Stalin's long political biography. With one short blow, Stalin mixed up all the figures on the pan-European field and left the Anglo-French bloc (whose leaders by that time had already managed to give Poland official guarantees of military assistance!) One on one with the Berlin dictator. "It's not bad at all if the position of the richest capitalist countries (especially England) is shaken by the hands of Germany ... We can maneuver, push one side against the other so that they are better torn apart ..." - with these words on September 7, 1939, a week after the start of the long-awaited European war, comrade Stalin explained the tasks of the moment to the leader of the Comintern, Georgy Dimitrov.

Nikita Khrushchev writes in his memoirs: "He literally walked around like a gogol, with his nose up, and literally said: "He fooled Hitler! Fooled Hitler!" Alas, the grandiose success turned Comrade Stalin's head. And since the autumn of 1939, he begins to make one mistake after another.

And the people answered for the mistakes

Unleashed by the "great leader" almost out of stubbornness alone ("It's time to curb the insignificant flea that jumps and grimace at our borders," as Pravda wrote in those days), the "small victorious war" with Finland led to a severe political defeat. The Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations, US President Roosevelt extended the so-called moral embargo to the USSR (a ban on the sale of aviation equipment and technologies to aggressor countries). Stalin managed to bring relations with future allies in the anti-Hitler coalition to such a boiling point when the Anglo-French headquarters considered plans for bombing the Baku oil fields, and the ill-fated Winter War had to be stopped at the moment when the first echelon of the Allied expeditionary force sent to help the Finns was already loaded on ships. Further - more (that is, much worse). In June 1940, instead of saving the remnants of the French front from final collapse, Stalin engaged in petty looting in the Baltics and Bessarabia (the fall of Paris

and the presentation of the Soviet ultimatum to the government of Lithuania occurred on the same day - June 14). The Stalinist leadership turned out to be completely incapable of assessing and properly responding to the radical change in the military-political situation that occurred in the summer of 1940. The Western (in relation to Germany) front, the same Second Front in Europe, the opening of which Stalin would have to beg the allies for a long time in the future, was lost without any opposition from the USSR. Moreover - lost with delight! Talking on June 13, 1940 with the ambassador of fascist Italy Rosso, the head of the Soviet

Government Vyacheslav Molotov said: "After the serious blows received by England and France, not only their strength, but also their prestige has fallen, and the dominance of these countries is coming to an end. It must be assumed that the voices of Germany and Italy, as well as the Soviet Union, will be more audible than at least a year ago.

By the fateful June 1941, Stalin brought the country into a state of complete international isolation (Mongolia could be considered the only ally). With the connivance (if not direct support) of the USSR, Hitler was able to establish control over the industrial and raw materials of most of continental Europe and deploy a land army of more than 200 divisions. Small, but not finished to the end, Finland, thanks to the supply of weapons from Germany and the huge mobilization tension, unsurpassed by any of the participants in the world war, was able to form 16 divisions, which later inflicted a crushing defeat on the troops of the Red Army and closed the ring of the land blockade of Leningrad from the north.

Relations with the only country really at war against Germany (England) were brought to such a state that for several months Ambassador Cripps unsuccessfully sought a meeting with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Convinced of the futility of his attempts, he, through Vyshinsky (at that time, Molotov's deputy for the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs), handed over a written statement on April 18, 1941, in which, in particular, it was said: "The British government still sees itself forced to consider the Soviet Union as the main Germany's source of supply ... In the light of the considerations outlined above, I have a desire to ask whether the Soviet government is now interested in carrying out an immediate improvement in its political and economic relations with the government of Great Britain, or, on the contrary, the Soviet government will be satisfied that these relations maintain their current, a completely negative character ... "Cripps received the first answer to his question immediately ("On the issue of the inviolability and security of the USSR, I told Cripps that the USSR

itself would take care of this, without the help of advisers"). After that, they stopped talking to the British Ambassador in Moscow altogether. On June 6, Cripps was recalled to London "for

consultations with the government" - in diplomatic language, this means the last step before breaking off relations. At the time of June 22, 1941, there was no English ambassador in the Soviet capital at all (!), And His Majesty King George VI was represented by the secretary of the Bagdadi embassy in the rank of "chargé d'affaires".

Having failed everything that could be failed, the political bankrupt Stalin brought the situation to the point where the army was supposed to save the country. And here the most terrible surprise awaited him: it turned out that the huge mountains of weapons accumulated over ten years are in themselves only dead metal, that the Red generals, who were frightened to death in 1937, are professionally unsuitable, that not all Red Army soldiers are grateful to Comrade Stalin for a happy collective farm childhood. A lot of things still had to be learned and understood by the time the front rolled back from Brest to Moscow and Tikhvin.

It may very well be that no one other than Stalin could have forced this army, which was falling apart before our eyes, to fight. It may very well be that there were no other methods, except for merciless mass executions, detachments, repressions against the relatives of commanders who had surrendered. A caliper that can be used to measure, "what would happen if ...", no one has yet invented. Therefore, I am ready to immediately, without a dispute, agree - yes, no one, except for the Great Stalin, could have pulled the country out of such a hole into which he had driven it.

notes

Notes

1

A city in western Germany, the capital of the Saarland.

Meltyukhov M. Soviet-Polish wars. M., 2004. S. 378–380.

3

On the bases of the strategic deployment of the armed forces of the USSR. http://bdsa.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1489

4

France capitulated on June 22, 1940. Coincidence?

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278-279.

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7

There. S. 239.

8

Sotskov L. Aggression. Declassified documents ... S. 269.

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10

State Security Organs of the USSR... S. 200–201.

eleven

There. pp. 202–203.

12

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13

State Security Organs of the USSR... S. 263–264.

14

In fact, the TASS message is dated June 14.

State Security Organs of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War.
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Cit. Quoted from: Kumanev G. Problems of the military history of the Fatherland. - M., 2007. - S. 75.

17

This text was kindly provided to me by a member of the Military Historical Forum with the nickname "Serge", presumably the historian Sergei Chekunov.

18

Nepzapas - emergency reserve, NZ.

19

Problem number one of the Artillery and Rifle Training Course, "authored by the famous Soviet mathematician, brigade commander E. S. Wentzel (That's a woman! - E. P.) - a single target, a machine gun in a trench.

20

CA MO RF. F. 16. Op. 2951. D.265. LI.26-30.

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militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/kalyadin_is/01.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/kalyadin_is/01.html)

24

"Senchen" is the pseudonym of Kim Philby, who held a senior position in British intelligence.

Soviet-American relations. 1939–1945 - M., 2004. - S. 128.

Rotmistrov P. Steel Guard. [http://militera.lib.ru/](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/rotmistrov2/02.html) M., 1984. //

Rear Admiral Alafuzov at that time was the head of the operational department of the fleet, deputy head of the Main Naval Staff of the Navy.

28

Here's how? Timoshenko went to see Stalin at 19.05, but where was Zhukov at that time? Or maybe Zhukov, Budyonny and Mekhlis? However, the Kremlin is big. Stalin's cabinet is not limited.

Defense of Leningrad. 1941–1944 Memoirs and diaries of participants. - L., 1968. - S. 224-227.

thirty

All three telegrams were provided to the author by researcher Oleg Kozinkin.

31

TsVMA, f. 216, d. 12487, l. 443. Original.

32

There, l. 442. Original.

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38

Stepanov V. Guilty without guilt. // A red star. April 6, 2011

39

Krikunov Front-line soldiers <http://liewar.ru/content/view/186/2/> answered So! //

40

Rokossovsky K. Soldatsky [http://](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/rokossovsky/01.html) duty. //

41

<http://inosmi.ru/world/20130701/210545153.html>

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43

In his memoirs, the pilot tells the same thing as on the forum, but in less detail.

44

[http://aviaforum.ru/showthread.php?
s=b8de73ee429ffef377c59db23cc4be29&t=7645&page=2](http://aviaforum.ru/showthread.php?s=b8de73ee429ffef377c59db23cc4be29&t=7645&page=2)

45

Shilin Guard [http://m.ua/story/47470/
#ixzz2PhuYxL2T](http://m.ua/story/47470/#ixzz2PhuYxL2T)

King.

//

46

Tsupko dive bombers. <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/tsupko/01.html> M., 1987 //

47

On the eve of the war, the concreting of the runways began.

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34. M., 1953 // <http://militera.lib.ru/docs/da/sbd/index.html>

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51

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52

Plus, previously received primary education.

Martynov E. Overdue reforms. // On Sat. "Officer Corps"
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57

Military commissar - military commissar.

58

PRI VO - Volga Military District.

59

It is curious that, when speaking about the Russian industrial boom, they usually cite growth rates, but they really do not like to talk about absolute indicators. Meanwhile, high growth rates may also be due to very low starting indicators. And what real industrial growth can there be with 20% of the urban population and 25% of the literate?

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node/1854

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Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR. 1937 - June 21, 1941. - M., 1994. - S. 99.

68

VOSO - military communications service.

69

Road chief.

State Security Organs of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War.
Collection of documents. T. 1 On the eve. Book one. - M., 1995. - S.
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71

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Irinarkhov R. Kiev Special ... - Minsk, 2006. - P. 84.

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76

There. R. S. 148.

Irinarkhov R. Kiev Special ... S. 148.

78

The Reichswehr was the name of the German army until 1935.
year was transformed into the Wehrmacht.